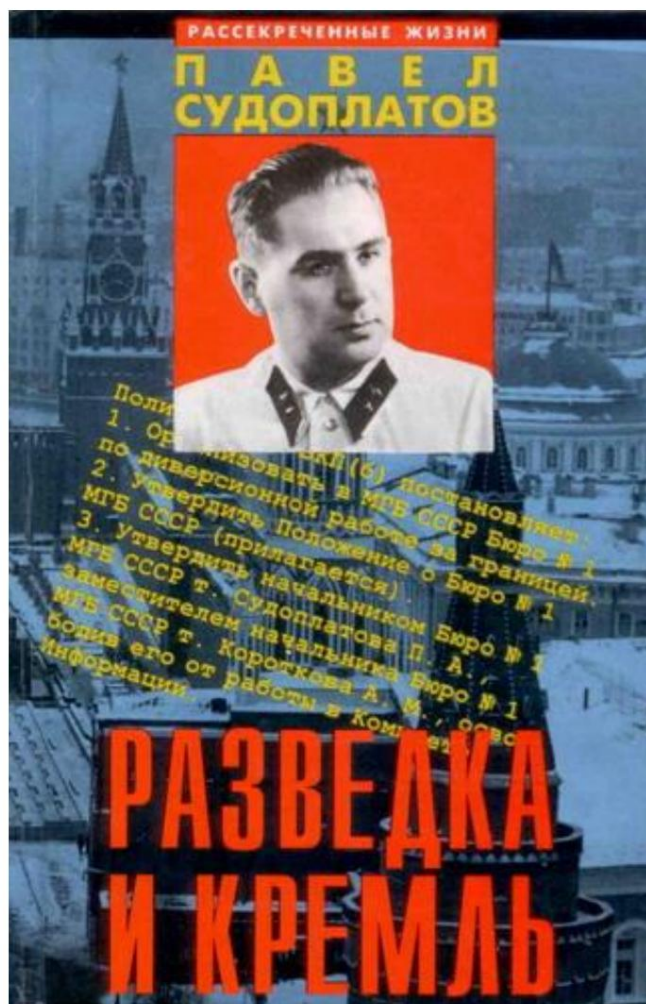


P. A. Sudoplatov
Intelligence and the Kremlin (Notes of an Unwanted Witness):
Declassified Lives



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annotation

For the first time in the world practice, the Gaia Publishing Company is launching the release of the Declassified Lives series. Its authors are former and current members of the secret services, active participants in the intelligence struggle in the 20th century. Readers get a unique opportunity to get acquainted "from the inside" with the mechanism of intelligence activities. "Intelligence and the Kremlin" - memoirs of Lieutenant General of the NKVD Sudoplatov P.A., one of the leaders of the intelligence of the Soviet security agencies, engaged in covert operations abroad, including nuclear espionage.

Sudoplatov P.A.
INTELLIGENCE AND THE KREMLIN
Notes of an Unwanted Witness

IN MEMORY OF THE WIFE, FIGHTING COMPANIES,
COMRADES WHO DIE IN THE FIGHT
WITH FASCISM AND VICTIMS OF ARBITRARY
I DEDICATE

From the publisher

Dear readers!

With this book, we open a new series of "Declassified Lives".

So far, the publishing house has published fiction - novels, short stories, collections of short stories, popular science monographs, books for children. Now completely different works are being added to them. In them, we would like to tell readers, Russian and foreign, about intelligence and counterintelligence service. With knowledge of the matter, objectively, honestly and truthfully.

The secret services cannot be without secrets. And any information about this important area of human activity, until recently, was kept sealed everywhere in the world. Only very recently the veil of total secrecy has begun to lift a little in states where an open society has been established or is being created.

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A distinctive feature of the new series is that all of our authors are either former or current intelligence officers. These are participants, eyewitnesses of events. Moreover, among them there were capable writers, people, as they say, with a spark of God.

The proposed series will include both fiction and non-fiction. They reflect the complex and controversial history of the secret war of the 20th century. Our "Stirlitz" talk about themselves and their business. You will learn from the inside about the everyday life of intelligence, the delicate and painstaking daily work that requires constant mobilization of the mind and experience, about the feat, professional risk, and inevitable moral problems. We want to give a wide range of Russian and foreign readers a true and objective picture of the activities of the special services, to tell about the most significant secret operations of the past years.

Now you will open the first book of our new series. We wish you interesting and useful reading!

From the author

Whether we like it or not, but time passes, and what yesterday was the Great State Secret loses its exclusivity and secrecy due to sharp turns in the history of the state and becomes a common property - there would be a desire to know the truth.

Fate decreed that by the time this book was completed, I, one of the leaders of the independent centers of military and foreign policy intelligence of the Soviet Union, remained the only witness of the confrontation between the special services and zigzags in the Kremlin's domestic and foreign policy in the period of 1930 - 1950s.

Despite the repressions in the pre-war and post-war years, I, who was imprisoned for 15 years, due to a bizarre combination of circumstances and undoubted luck, managed to survive and write down a number of memoirs related to the contradictory and tragic "development of events of that time.

The affairs of intelligence and counterintelligence have never been held in high esteem by the leading circles of Russia. However, under totalitarian rule, they sometimes acquired significant significance in the actions of the authorities. My own popularity as a professional is the least of all, but after the collapse of the USSR, as it seems to me, primarily due to unprincipled squabbling and the struggle for power in the country, I consider it my duty to tell people the truth about what really happened in 30-50 years, so that they understand the logic of the tragic and heroic events in the history of our Motherland. The motives for the criminal repressions, in which the leadership of the country and the security agencies are guilty, were connected not only with the personal ambitions of Stalin and other "leaders", but also with the struggle for power that was constantly going on inside their environment. This struggle has always been skillfully covered up by loud slogans - "fight against deviations" in the ruling party "accelerated construction of communism", "fight against the enemies of the people", "fight against the cosmopolitans", "perestroika". And in the end, the victims of all these campaigns have always turned out to be millions of innocent people.

For me, this is the main theme of the book. I am sure it is very different from the myth about the motives behind the actions of the so-called "conservative" or "democratic" circles of the former Kremlin leadership.

I also consider it necessary to pay attention to the fact that my memoirs do not in any way pretend to be a scientific and historical narrative. This is a subjective view of an eyewitness on how the mechanisms that set the political machine of the USSR in action worked, how it was possible to create a powerful state at the cost of colossal sacrifices, which to a certain extent determined the development of world events in the 30s and 50s, became a superpower, kept in fear not only its citizens, but the whole world. His strength was in the elimination of poverty and devastation that engulfed the country after the civil war, in a deep faith in the correctness of the great social revolution of the 20th century. That is why, sympathizing with the USSR, it was directly and indirectly supported by the great minds of the modern world - Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi, Robert Oppenheimer, Albert Einstein and others.

The fierce confrontation between the USSR and the Western world is the main reason for mutual intolerance in all events in the domestic and foreign policy of our country.

I have no doubts, no matter how disputed it is today, that the ruling circles of the West not only hated our state, but throughout its history did everything in their power to destroy it. The forced alliance of the USA, Britain and the USSR in the fight against Hitlerism during the war years was also not a respite in their confrontation. The Cold War continued, but the rapid defeat of the USSR in the fight against Germany was unfavorable for the West, which feared for its world domination. Until December 1991, everything was done to weaken the USSR. And now we are experiencing painful experiences in connection with the transition to a new stage of confrontation and cooperation with the countries of the West, which will still be based on the historical role of Russia as one of the superpowers of our time. However, now, unlike in previous years, we are not talking about the survival of our state.

The legacy of the USSR reliably guarantees acceptable twists and turns and zigzags and makes us a powerful partner in negotiations on the international arena. Of course, internal instability in the country and failures in economic policy inevitably force the ruling circles to place responsibility for the mistakes made on the past leadership again and again. Hence the constant hostility, sometimes growing into hatred for those who, by their real work, contributed to the basis of modern development, which still remains an indestructible factor in the pride and prestige of the Motherland.

Observing the military oath, I was silent as long as the Soviet Union existed. When the activities of Soviet intelligence and a number of aspects of the foreign policy of the USSR ceased to be secret after the well-known events of 1991, and everything that I faithfully served ceased to exist, I could not and had no right to remain silent any longer. Unfortunately, I had no other choice but to publish my memoirs initially in the West, since the domestic publishers intended to publish them only after consultation with "competent authorities". I am sincerely grateful to J. and L. Shekhter, who made a literary record of my memoirs and helped them to see the light.

In creating this book, I was greatly supported by my comrades in arms, with whom I shared all the difficulties of our difficult and dangerous work. I consider it my duty to especially thank for the moral assistance in the publication of this book the former head of the Soviet foreign intelligence L.V. Shebarshin, veterans of the state security agencies S.A. Ananin, P.I. Massya, A.N. Rylov, I.A. Yu.A. Kolesnikov, S.V. Zarubin, A.F. Kamaev-Filonenko, writer publicist K.A. Stolyarov.

INTELLIGENCE AND THE KREMLIN

(30-50s)

BAPTISM OF FIRE

I was born in 1907 in Ukraine, in the city of Melitopol, located in a fruit-rich region and at that time numbering about twenty thousand inhabitants. My mother is Russian, and my father was Ukrainian - a laborer, a baker, a baker, a cook, a waiter. Like all children - and there were five of us in the family - I was baptized in the Russian Orthodox Church on the day of Peter and Paul. My primary education included the study of the New and Old Testaments and the basics of the Russian language, since in tsarist times the teaching of Ukrainian in schools was forbidden. They were used only as a conversational. Until the age of ten, until my father died, I had the most ordinary childhood. After his death, the care of the family fell on the shoulders of his mother and older sister. In the year of his father's death, a revolution took place, the Bolsheviks took power.

At first, life in the city changed little, and everything flowed as usual. However, as soon as food supplies ran out, chaos began, accompanied by gang terror. Our family did not have any property, we rented a two-room apartment in a small one-story house that belonged to the landlord Khrolenko. My perception of the events of that time can be considered typical of low-income families who had nothing to lose. Quite naturally, I believed with all my heart, after reading Bukharin's ABC of Revolution, that public ownership would mean building a just society, where everyone would be equal, and the country would be ruled by representatives of the peasantry and the working class in the interests of ordinary people, and not

landowners and capitalists.

My older brother Nikolai joined the Red Army in 1918 - two years later he became a fighter in the Cheka detachment. The year before, at the age of twelve, I had run away from home and joined a Red Army regiment, which was soon forced to leave Melitopol. Our regiment was defeated by the Whites, and only small groups of fighters managed to join the units of the 44th Rifle Division of the Red Army in the Kyiv region. Since by that time I had already graduated from elementary school and could read, I was assigned to a pony connection. Later, I took part in the battles near Kiev. In 1921, when I

turned fourteen, employees of the Special Department of the division were ambushed by Ukrainian nationalists, and many of them died. At that time, we fought mainly not with the Whites, but with the troops of Ukrainian nationalists, led by Petlyura and Konovalets, the commander of the Sich Riflemen corps. When the civil war began, Ukrainian nationalists proclaimed an independent republic and officially declared war on Russia and the Ukrainian Bolshevik leadership in January 1919. (In the 1930s and then again in the 1940s, I also took a direct part in the fight against Ukrainian nationalists.) This fight actually ended only in January 1992, after the Ukrainian government in exile and the rest of the world recognized the president Kravchuk as the legitimate head of the sovereign state of Ukraine.

In the Special Department, which suffered heavy losses, a telephone operator was urgently needed and cryptographer. So I was sent to work in the security agencies. This was the beginning of my service in the Cheka-KGB.

In the division where I served, Poles, Austrians, Germans, Serbs and even Chinese fought with us. The latter were very disciplined and fought to the last drop of blood. The struggle was fierce, and it happened that entire villages were destroyed by Ukrainian nationalists and gangs: in total, over a million people died during the civil war in Ukraine. My generation soon became accustomed to the brutality of this war, loss and hardship. We thought it was all natural. The country had been in a state of war since 1914, and the tragedy of Russia was that until the very end of the civil war, that is, until 1922, it was not possible to create a stable society based on normal, humane values.

The experience gained while performing the duties of a telephone operator, and then a cryptographer, proved to be useful. I typed documents marked "secret" sent to the command, and deciphered the telegrams that we received directly from the head of the Cheka, Felix Dzerzhinsky from Moscow.

1921 was a turning point in my life. The division was transferred to Zhitomir. The main task of our Special Department was to assist the local Cheka in penetrating partisan underground of Ukrainian nationalists led by Petlyura and Konovalets. Their armed bands staged acts of sabotage against local Soviet authorities. Pogazhevich and Savin, who headed the Cheka, managed to establish a dialogue with the partisan leaders and hold informal negotiations with them. My leadership met with them in Zhitomir at a safe house. I, as a junior employee on the sidelines, let my wives live in the house where the safe house was located, and serve the negotiations. The experience of communicating with the leaders of the formations of Ukrainian nationalists, who were, in fact, the real masters in their district, helped me in the future, when I became an operative worker of state security. I have experienced in my own skin what it is like to deal with underground conspiracies.

The war with the Ukrainian nationalists lasted almost two years and ended in a compromise - their leaders accepted the amnesty that the government of Soviet Ukraine gave them. This happened only after the cavalry detachment of two thousand sabers, sent by Konovalets to Zhitomir, was surrounded by units of the Red Army and surrendered. The Konovalets gang suffered a crushing defeat. In these battles, my older brother Nikolai, who served in the border troops on the Polish border, died. I filed a report on the transfer to Melitopol in order to be closer to the family and be able to help her.

During the last three years of my stay in Melitopol, I was a junior operative in the district department of the GPU and was responsible for the work of informants operating in the Greek, Bulgarian and German settlements. In 1927 I received a promotion and was transferred to Kharkov, then the capital of Ukraine, where I began to work in the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR. It was there, in Kharkov, that I met my future wife, Emma Kaganova: I was twenty, she was two years older - she came to Ukraine from the Belarusian city of Gomel.

Emma was capable, and she managed to enter the gymnasium, where there was a restrictive norm for Jews. She graduated from several classes of the gymnasium and later began working as a secretary-typist for Khataevich, secretary of the Gomel provincial organization of the Bolsheviks. When her boss was transferred to Odessa, where he headed the party organization, she followed him. It was in Odessa that Emma transferred to the local GPU. She was assigned to work among the German colonists living in the city. A blue-eyed blonde, she spoke a close German Yiddish and could easily pass for a German.

She was transferred to Kharkov a year before I moved there. Emma occupied a more significant position in the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR than such a novice as I was then. As an educated and attractive woman, moreover, well-read and feeling quite free in the society of writers and poets, she was entrusted with leading the activities of informers among the Ukrainian creative intelligentsia - writers and theater figures. We met her at the service, and I was struck by her beauty and intelligence. Emma's father, a lumberjack, died when she was only ten years old. She started working and single-handedly supported the whole family, where there were eight children. So Emma and I had a lot in common: both I and she were the support for the family and had to grow up early due to circumstances.

Despite the fact that our whole life was filled with work, my wife encouraged me to study law at Kharkov University. But I, however, managed to attend only ten lectures and pass one exam - in economic geography. I just didn't have time for more. My working day began at ten in the morning and ended at six in the evening with a short lunch break. After that, meetings with informers began at safe houses. They lasted from half past seven in the evening until eleven. Then I returned to the service to report to the authorities about the operational materials I received.

According to Lenin's decree of 1922, the GPU was to become the main source of information for all levels of the Soviet leadership. Even today, the country's leadership receives monthly reports on the situation in the state from the state security agencies through their agents. This kind of report includes a statement of internal difficulties and shortcomings in the work of various organizations, enterprises and institutions. According to the established order under Stalin, it was not supposed to meet with your informant in the daytime. That's why we met in the evenings. It was known that Stalin stayed up late, and we work in the same mode.

Ironically, the information section of our department was headed by the former tsarist officer Kozelsky, who came from an impoverished noble family. Although this man served in the tsarist army, his sympathies for the Bolsheviks, which manifested themselves during the years of the revolution, allowed him to win our confidence. In 1937, he committed suicide to avoid arrest during the purge campaign...

For me, Emma was the ideal of a real woman, and in 1928 we got married, although we officially registered our marriage only in 1951. So many of my comrades lived, not formalizing their marriage for years.

Meanwhile, the work went on as usual, and I received a new - very unusual, but very important - task, which was jointly controlled by the leaders of the OGPU and party bodies. My new position was called: commissioner of the special colony in Priluki for homeless children. After the civil war, colonies of this kind aimed to put an end to the homelessness of orphans, who were forced by hunger and unbearable living conditions to take the path of crime. For the maintenance of these colonies, each Chekist had to deduct ten percent of his salary. Under them, workshops and professional training groups were created: the work activity of the children was then given decisive importance. After winning the trust of the colonists, I was able to organize a fire extinguisher factory, which soon began to generate income.

Thanks to my wife's position in Ukrainian party circles, I met twice

with Kosior, then secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. These meetings were held at Khataevich's apartment, where we were invited as guests. I was particularly impressed by the way both leaders looked at the future of Ukraine. They considered economic problems and the tragedy of collectivization as temporary difficulties that should be overcome by all possible means. According to them, it was necessary to educate a new generation absolutely devoted to the cause of communism and free from any obligations to the old morality. The greatest attention should have been paid to the development and support of the new Ukrainian intelligentsia, hostile to nationalist ideas. It took another sixty years and the collapse of the Soviet Union for it to become obvious: it was necessary to at least show tolerance and try to understand the other side, and not seek to destroy it at all costs.

My wife and I were flattered that people like Kosior and Khatayevich were talking to us as if they were their party comrades, although we were both members of the Komsomol at the time. We became candidates for party membership later.

In 1933, the head of the Ukrainian GPU, Balitsky, was appointed deputy chairman of the all-Union OGPU. Moving to Moscow for a new job, he took several employees with him, including me. I received the post of senior inspector in the personnel department of the central apparatus of state security, who oversaw the transfer of service and new appointments in the Foreign Department (foreign intelligence) of the OGPU.

At that time, I began to often collide at work with Artuzov, then head of the Foreign Department, and his deputy Slutsky. In 1933, Kulynych, an officer in charge of operational monitoring and combating Ukrainian emigration in the West, submitted a letter of resignation for health reasons. Upon learning that I was from Ukraine and had experience working in local conditions, Artuzov offered me this position. By that time, Emma had also transferred to Moscow and was assigned to the Secret Political Department. Since 1934, her duties included working with a network of informers in the newly created Writers' Union and among the creative intelligentsia.

After the tragic murder of the Soviet diplomat Maylov in Lvov, committed by the OUN terrorist Lemek in 1934, the chairman of the OGPU Menzhinsky issued an order to develop an action plan to neutralize the terrorist actions of Ukrainian nationalists. The Ukrainian GPU reported that it had succeeded in infiltrating an underground military organization of Ukrainian nationalists in exile (OUN) with its trusted agent, Lebed. This was a major achievement.

Slutsky, by that time the head of the Foreign Department, offered me to become an illegal employee working abroad. At first this seemed unrealistic to me, since I had no experience of working abroad, and I knew nothing about living conditions in the West. In addition, my knowledge of German, which I should have needed in Germany and Poland, where I had to work, was equal to zero.

However, the more I thought about this offer, the more tempting it seemed to me. And I agreed. After that, he immediately began an intensive study of the German language - classes were held at a safe house five times a week. Experienced instructors also taught me the techniques of hand-to-hand combat and the use of weapons. The meetings with the Deputy Head of the Foreign Department of the OGPU - NKVD Shpigelglas were extremely useful for me. He had a lot of experience working abroad as an illegal immigrant - in China and Western Europe. In the early 1930s, in Paris, a fish shop specializing in the sale of lobsters, located near Montmartre, served as a "roof" for him.

After eight months of training, I was ready to go on my first foreign assignment, accompanied by Lebed, the "chief representative" of the OUN in Ukraine, and in fact our secret agent for many years. Swan from 1915 to 1918

spent a year together with Konovalets in a prisoner-of-war camp near Tsaritsyn. During the civil war, he became Konovalets's deputy and commanded an infantry division that fought against units of the Red Army in Ukraine. After Konovalets retreated to Poland in 1920, Lebed was sent by him to Ukraine to organize an underground OUN network. But there he was arrested. The choice before him was simple: either work for us or die.

Lebed became for us a key figure in the fight against banditry in Ukraine in the 1920s. His reputation in nationalist circles abroad remained as before high: Konovalets considered his representative as a person capable of conducting preparatory work for the seizure of power by the OUN in Kiev in case of war. From Lebed, whom we allowed to travel to the West in the 20s and 30s through illegal channels, we learned that Konovalets cherished plans to seize Ukraine in a future war. In Berlin, Lebed met with Colonel Alexander, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris's predecessor as head of the German intelligence service in the early 1930s, and learned from him that Konovalets had seen Hitler twice, who suggested that several Konovalets supporters take a course in the Nazi party school in Leipzig.

I went abroad as Lebed's "nephew", ostensibly to help him with his work. My wife was transferred to the Foreign Department of the NKVD so that through her I could keep in touch with the Center. She was supposed to act as a student from Geneva, which allowed her to meet with agents in Western Europe from time to time. To this end, she took a special course.

Lebed did not know that another agent was working for us, Poluvedko, the main representative of Konovalets in Finland. He lived on a false passport in Helsinki, organizing contacts between Ukrainian nationalists in exile and their underground organization in Leningrad. OUN members hid their archives in Leningrad, in the famous library named after Saltykov-Shchedrin. Although we knew this, it was only after the end of the Second World War, in 1949, that the archives were discovered.

I left for Helsinki accompanied by Lebed. Lebed handed me over to the care of Poluvedko and immediately returned to Kharkov via Moscow. Poluvedko, who knew nothing about my true work, regularly sent reports about me to the NKVD through Zoya Voskresenskaya-Rybkina, who was in charge of communication with him. I had to let the Center know that I was all right, and, as agreed in advance, I wrote a note to my "girlfriend" and then tore it up and threw it into the wastebasket. Acting as my involuntary assistant, Poluvedko collected the scraps and handed them over to Zoya. And at some stage, Poluvedko even offered to remove me, which he reported in one of his reports, but, fortunately, the solution of this issue did not depend on him. In Finland (and later in Germany) I lived very poorly: I had no pocket money, and I was constantly hungry. Poluvedko gave me only ten Finnish marks a day, and they were barely enough for dinner - at the same time, one coin had to be left for the evening for the gas meter, otherwise the heating and gas stove would not work. At secret meetings between us, the schedule of which was determined before my departure from Moscow, Zoya Rybkina and her husband Boris Rybkin, a resident in Finland who was in charge of my intelligence activities in that country, brought sandwiches and chocolate. Before they left, they went through my pockets to make sure I hadn't taken any food with me, which could have ruined our "game."

After two months of waiting, messengers from Konovalets arrived in Helsinki - Gribivsky ("Chancellor") from Prague and Andrievsky from Brussels. We went to Stockholm

steamer.

Upon boarding, I was handed a fake Lithuanian passport. When we arrived in Stockholm, all passengers were gathered in the dining room, and the waiter began to distribute passports that passed the border control. At first, he refused to return my passport to me, saying that the photo clearly did not match the original. Indeed, the passport was in the name of Stsiborsky, a member of the Central leadership of the OUN, a Ukrainian activist, with his photograph. Fortunately, an indignant Poluvedko intervened, threatening the waiter and forcing him to return the document to me. After a week in Stockholm, we went to Germany, where I had no more trouble with the same passport. In June 1936 we arrived in Berlin, and there I met with Konovalets, who questioned me about everything with great predilection. Our meeting took place in an apartment located in the building of the Museum of Ethnography and provided to him by the German intelligence service. In September I was sent for three months to a Nazi school in Leipzig. During my studies, I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the OUN leadership. The students of the school were naturally interested in my personality. However, there were no problems with my "legend".

Meanwhile, my conversations with Konovalets became more and more serious. His plans included the preparation of administrative bodies for a number of regions of Ukraine, which were supposed to be released in the near future, and Ukrainian nationalists were to act in alliance with the Germans. I learned that they already had two brigades at their disposal, a total of about two thousand people, who were supposed to be used as police forces in Galicia (part of Western Ukraine, then part of Poland) and in Germany.

The OUN tried in every possible way to involve me in the struggle for power, which was going on between their two main groups: "old people" and "youth". The former were represented by Konovalets and his deputy Melnik, while the "youth" was led by Bandera and Kostarev. My main task was to convince them that terrorist activities in Ukraine had no chance of success, that the authorities would immediately crush small pockets of resistance. I insisted that our forces and underground network should be kept in reserve until war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union, in which case

use them immediately.

The terrorist ties of this organization were especially disturbing, in particular, an agreement with Croatian nationalists and participation in the assassination of the Yugoslav King Alexander and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou. It was a discovery for me that all these terrorists were financed by the Abwehr, the intelligence and counterintelligence service of the Wehrmacht. The news came as a complete surprise to me that the assassination of the Polish Minister General Peratsky in 1934 by the Ukrainian terrorist Matseyko was carried out contrary to the order of Konovalets and that Bandera was behind this, vying with the latter for power. Bandera sought to control the organization, playing on the natural dislike of Ukrainians towards Peratsky, who was responsible for the repression of the Ukrainian minority in Poland. Konovalets told me that by this time a friendship treaty had been signed between Poland and Germany, so that the Germans were in no way satisfied with any hostile actions towards the Poles. They were so furious that they betrayed Bandera, who was hiding in Germany. The general's killer, Maceyko, managed to escape.

The matter was as follows. Maciejko planned to kill Peracki by detonating a grenade, but for some reason it did not explode, and he shot the Polish minister. A crowd of people immediately followed him. Matseyko managed to slip in front of the oncoming tram, which cut him off from his pursuers, ran into the entrance of the first house, climbed to the platform of the 7th floor, threw off his raincoat and hat, threw away his revolver and, unrecognized, calmly went out into the street. Polish counterintelligence set up an ambush at all the safe houses of Ukrainian nationalists in Warsaw, but he did not appear at any of them. He spent the night with his girlfriend, also a Ukrainian terrorist Chemerineka. Exactly

she organized his escape through the Carpathians to Czechoslovakia, using her contacts in the Czech police.

In Czechoslovakia, the OUN had strong support from the authorities. President Beneš had a personal relationship with Konovalets since the First World War. However, when the OUN "got out of control" of the authorities and carried out the assassination of Peratsky, these relations deteriorated.

Despite Bandera's emotional speech in court in defense of the cause of Ukrainian nationalism, he and other organizers were sentenced to death by hanging. However, German pressure on the Polish authorities eventually saved their lives. The death sentence was commuted to prison. The Germans, after the capture of Poland, immediately released Bandera to freedom. And between the two groups of Ukrainian nationalists, a bloody internecine war began to boil.

In dealing with my colleagues in the Nazi party school, I was absolutely confident and independent: after all, I represented the head part of their underground organization in Ukraine, while they were just emigrants who existed on German handouts. I had the right to veto their proposals because I was following the instructions of my "uncle" ("vuiko"). If I didn't like something in their statements, it was enough just to say: "Vuiko didn't order!"

It was in this way that I rejected the offer of my meeting with Colonel Lahousen of the Abwehr headquarters. It would be risky to make direct contact with German intelligence, as the Germans might try to force me to cooperate. Again and again I had to repeat my objections to meeting someone from the Abwehr.

Once, when we were walking with Konovalets, a street photographer came up to us and took a picture of us, passing the film to Konovalets, who paid two marks for it. I got angry. It was clear that my Berlin entourage wanted to have a photograph in their file so that they could look for me later, when they needed it. Then, on the street, I expressed my unequivocal protest to Konovalets. It would be an unforgivable mistake if such a photograph were in the hands of the Germans, I told him, without any doubt that this was his true goal. Konovalets tried to somehow calm me down. According to him, there was nothing reprehensible in the fact that some street photographer who earns his living took a picture of the two of us walking along a Berlin street.

Later I found out that I was right. During the war, SMERSH² captured two spies in Western Ukraine, one of them had this photo. When asked why he needed her, he replied: "I have no idea who this person is, but we have received orders to eliminate him if we find him."

I managed to gain confidence in Konovalets by giving him the contents of a confidential conversation. Somehow Kostarev and several other young Ukrainian nationalists, students of the Nazi party school, began to say that Konovalets was too old to lead the organization and should be used only as a decorative figure. When they asked my opinion, I replied indignantly:

Who are you to suggest such a thing? Our organization not only fully trusts Konovalets, but also regularly receives support from him, and we did not hear anything about you before my arrival here.

When I told Konovalets about this, his face turned pale. Later Kostarev was destroyed. I don't think this is a coincidence.

It was decided at the Center that as soon as I arrived in Germany, I should be completely independent and not maintain any contact with either our resident swarm,

not with illegals. Konovalets took me under his wing and often visited me: the two of us wandered around the city. Once he even took me to a performance at the Berlin Opera, but in general there were not so many entertainments in my life there. The Ukrainian community was very poor, and it was out of the question to afford any luxury. If you were invited to tea, it was customary to bring sugar with you. The Ukrainians I talked to naively thought that they could help finance the OUN with the income of some shoe polish factory owned by their relatives in Poland. They literally longed for a war between Germany and Poland and the USSR as a liberation from the yoke of "national oppression".

Konovalets became attached to me and even suggested that I accompany him on an inspection trip to Paris and Vienna in order to check the state of affairs in the Ukrainian emigre circles that supported him. He had money received from the Germans, and this allowed him to play the role of leader of a powerful organization.

We stayed in different hotels in Paris. During our stay in the city there was a general strike, and all the restaurants were closed, so Konovalets took me to dinner in ... Versailles. The subway did not work either, and we had to take a taxi, which, by the way, was very expensive. I was very impressed with Paris and remain a fan of it

up to this day.

The Center was aware that Konovalets and I intended to spend three weeks in Paris and decided to use this opportunity to arrange for me to meet with my courier. According to the instructions from Moscow, I was supposed to go to such a meeting in Paris, if possible, and later in Vienna. To do this, I had to appear twice a week between five and six in the evening at the corner of the Place de Clichy and the Boulevard de Clichy. The courier was supposed to be personally known to me, but his name was not disclosed to me - these were the "conspiracy rules", - anyone could turn out to be him. On my first appearance at the agreed place, I saw ... my own wife, dressed in the latest fashion: she was sitting at a cafe table on the street and slowly sipping black coffee. At that moment I was overwhelmed by the most diverse feelings. With an effort of will, I managed to force myself to make sure that I was not being followed, and only then did I approach Emma. It immediately became quite clear to me: the place for the rendezvous was chosen extremely unsuccessfully, since the crowd scurrying around did not make it possible to check whether there was a "tail" behind you or not.

The experience of my work in Kharkov against the Polish agents taught me that almost all the failures were due to the poor choice of the meeting place. Pulling myself together, I asked in bad German for permission to sit next to a table. We were both extremely stressed. Emma, when I sat down next to her, asked if I was all right.

"Although you have lost weight, you look, in my opinion, excellent," she added with smile. - Yes, and shaved this time perfectly.

This remark clearly hinted at the fact that at home, in Russia, I often shaved through day.

After sitting at a table for a while, we quietly left: this cafe was too open for prying eyes. Walking towards the boulevard, we noticed two gendarmes, obviously heading in our direction. On instinct, we immediately crossed the street to avoid the police. Now, looking back, I see how stupid it was.

Emma's budget hotel (quite appropriate for a student spending her holidays in Paris) was only a few blocks from where we met. Although I was delighted to meet my wife, whom I had not seen for almost a year, I was afraid to put her at even the slightest risk by dating me. We hugged, and I immediately told her to convey to the Center my demand: under no circumstances should Emma be my contact. After all, I was not one of those who live permanently in the West, so I could say with complete confidence: all my contacts are carefully studied and analyzed as intelligence of Ukrainian

nationalists and Germans. And if German or even French counterintelligence has reason to believe that Emma is connected with me, then she will certainly be captured and subjected to interrogation with prejudice. That is why I ordered her to immediately return to Switzerland, and from there home. I had to do this in order to get rid of anxiety for her fate and feel safe. Emma immediately assured me that she would leave for Berne immediately. I informed her about the state of affairs in Ukrainian émigré circles and about the significant support they received from Germany. She was especially curious about the information concerning the strife within the Ukrainian organization: I told Emma about my proposed trip with Konovalts to Vienna and convincingly asked her not to appear there as a courier near the Schönbrunn Palace - the place of the proposed meeting.

During our stay in Paris, Konovalts invited me to visit with him the grave of Petlyura, who, after being defeated by the Red Army, fled to the capital of France, where he was killed in 1926. Konovalts idolized this man, calling him "our banner and our most beloved leader." He said that the memory of Petliura must be preserved. I was pleased that Konovalts took me with him, but one thought haunted me, that it was supposed to put flowers on the grave during a visit. Meanwhile, my purse was empty, and I did not consider it possible for myself to remind Konovalts of such trifles. It would be simply tactless in relation to a person who occupied such a high position, although, in essence, it was his responsibility to take care of the flowers in this case, and not me. What to do? All the way to the cemetery, this thought continued to torment me.

We walked through the entire cemetery and stopped in front of a modest tombstone on the grave of Petlyura. Konovalts crossed himself - I followed his example. We stood in silence for a while, then I took a handkerchief out of my pocket and wrapped a handful of earth with graves.

- What are you doing?! exclaimed Konovalts.

"I will take this land from Petlyura's grave to Ukraine," I answered, "we are in his memory plant a tree and take care of it.

The horseman was delighted. He hugged me, kissed me, and warmly praised me for the beautiful idea. As a result, our friendship and his trust in me grew even stronger.

Konovalts told me that one of his assistants, Gribivsky, was suspected of collaborating with the Czechoslovak counterintelligence, and asked me to meet with him and try to probe him. After the assassination in Warsaw of General Peratsky by Ukrainian nationalists, the Czechs promptly, in one day, seized all the appearances of the Ukrainian organization in Prague and took away many of the dossiers that were under the jurisdiction of Gribivsky. I already knew this story. My close friend and colleague Kaminsky, who had been in Germany two years before me as an illegal immigrant, tried to recruit Gribivsky, ostensibly on behalf of the Slovak police, to work as an informer, although in fact it was about working for us. Gribivsky, for his part, intended to capture Kaminsky during the appointed meeting, but he, seeing the shadowing, avoided the trap, having time to jump into a passing tram. Konovalts quite correctly suspected that Kaminsky was not a Slovak but a Soviet agent, and knowing this, I strongly objected to my meeting with Gribivsky, stating that he might be controlled by the Bolsheviks (after all, he could have deliberately pretended that failed to capture Kaminsky), and therefore contacts with him can illuminate me and lead to the failure of my mission here.

After our arrival in Vienna, I went to a predetermined meeting place, where I found my curator and mentor for work in Moscow, Zubov. He was an experienced scout, and I always tried to get as much knowledge from him as possible. I informed him in detail about the activities of Konovalts and informed him that our trip to the opera was scheduled for the next day. Zubov managed to buy a ticket for the same performance - he was sitting right behind us and could hear everything that we talked about with my companion. Leaving the theater, I deliberately ran into Zubov in the crowd of spectators and even apologized for pushing him. In essence, it was a stupid children's

trick

From Vienna, I returned to Berlin, where for several months there were futile negotiations about the possible deployment of underground forces in Ukraine in the event of a war. During this period, I traveled twice from Germany to Paris, where I met with the leaders of the Ukrainian government in exile. Konovalts warned me about these people: according to him, they should not be taken seriously, since in reality everything will be decided not by these gentlemen who wiped their trousers in Parisian cafes, but by his military

organization.

In the meantime, my "uncle", Lebed, using his connections, sent through Finland an order for my return to Ukraine, where I was to be registered as a radio operator on a Soviet ship that regularly called at foreign ports. This would give me the opportunity to maintain constant communication between the OUN underground in Ukraine and nationalist organizations abroad. Konovalts liked the idea and agreed with my return to the Soviet Union.

With false documents, accompanied by Sushko, Konovalts's deputy (Konovalts wanted to make sure that I crossed the border safely), I reached the Soviet-Finnish border through Finland. Sushko led me to a place where it seemed safe to cross the border, which ran through the swamp here. However, as soon as I got close to the border, I was intercepted by the Finnish border patrol. I was arrested and imprisoned in Helsinki. I was interrogated there for a month. I explained to them that I was a Ukrainian nationalist and I was striving to return to the Soviet Union, following the order of my organization.

All this month the atmosphere in the Center was very tense, as Zoya Rybkina informed from Helsinki about my return. To find out what happened to me, Zubov and Shpigelglas went to the border. Everyone thought that most likely I was liquidated by Sushko.

Three weeks after my arrest, the official Ukrainian representative in Helsinki, Poluvedko, received a request from the Finnish police and Abwehr officers about a certain Ukrainian who was trying to get into the Soviet Union. Between the Abwehr and Finnish intelligence there was an agreement on control over the Soviet border - any defectors were checked by them jointly. In the end, I was handed over to Poluvedko, who accompanied me to Tallinn. There I was given another false Lithuanian passport, and the Soviet consulate issued a short-term tourist visa for a trip to Leningrad. This time there were no problems crossing the border: the border guard stamped my passport, and then I managed to slip away from the foreign tourist guide who was waiting for me in Leningrad. I am sure that this caused a real commotion in the Intourist department and the police must have been put on their feet to find the missing Lithuanian tourist in the city.

A successful business trip to Western Europe changed my position in intelligence. The results of the work were reported to Stalin and Kosior, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, as well as Petrovsky, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the republic. In Slutsky's office, where I reported in detail about my trip, I was introduced to two people: one of them was Serebryansky, head of the Special Group under the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs - an independent and at that time unknown to me Center for Cordless Intelligence of the Security Organs - and the other, according to - to my mind, Vasiliev, an employee of Stalin's secretariat. Neither of these I knew before.

Later, I was awarded the Order of the Red Banner, which was presented to me by the head of state M.I. Kalinin. Together with me in the Kremlin, Zarubin also received the Order of the Red Banner, who had just returned from an illegal trip to Western Europe, almost at the same time as me. We met him then for the first time. Later we became close, and this friendship lasted all my life, although he was much older than me.

During a friendly dinner in honor of Zarubin and me at Slutsky's apartment, I

I had to drink - for the second time in my life - a glass of vodka. This happened for the first time in Odessa, when I was fifteen years old. Although I was a physically healthy person, the doctors determined that alcoholic beverages with a strength of more than twelve degrees are contraindicated for me. However, Slutsky and Shpigelglas ordered me to accept the "norm" for a military order, and the next day I lay in bed. The reaction of the body was terrible: unbearable headache and vomiting.

Throughout 1937 and part of 1938, I traveled to the West on several occasions as a courier. The roof for me was the position of a radio operator on a cargo ship. When I met Konovalets, I was horrified to hear that the OUN had given the Germans misinformation that a number of Ukrainian Red Army commanders—Fedko, Dubova, and others (all of whom were later liquidated by Stalin)—expressed their sympathy for the Ukrainian nationalist cause. The people of Konovalets made up stories like this to impress the Germans and get as much money from them as possible. Later I happened to read in the Ukrainian émigré press that such Red commanders as Dubovoy, Fedko and a number of others allegedly divided their loyalty between Soviet power and Ukrainian nationalism. Konovalets decided to tell me about this, because he knew that as the organizer of the Ukrainian underground, I would be able to find out the truth.

When I reported this to Spiegelglas in 1937, he suggested that contacts between Dubovoy and other commanders with Ukrainian nationalists and Germans were not impossible. I think that Spiegelglas just wanted to cover for me in case I passed on this information that was unpleasant for our leadership - after all, the fate of these commanders was already a foregone conclusion.

In November 1937, after the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution, I was called together with Slutsky to Yezhov, the then People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. I met him for the first time, and I was literally struck by his unsightly appearance. The questions he asked were about the most elementary things for any intelligence officer and sounded incompetent. It was felt that he did not know the very basics of working with sources of information. Moreover, it seems that he was not at all interested in strife within the organization of Ukrainian emigrants. Meanwhile, Yezhov was both People's Commissar of Internal Affairs and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party. I sincerely believed that I was simply not able to appreciate the intellectual qualities that allowed this man to occupy such high positions. Although by that time I was already a very experienced professional in the intelligence service, but as far as a career in the highest echelons of power was concerned, I remained a naive person: after all, those leaders with whom I have encountered so far, such as Kosior and Petrovsky, who headed Communist Party of Ukraine, were highly intelligent people with a broad outlook.

After listening to my message regarding upcoming meetings with Ukrainian nationalists, Yezhov suddenly suggested that I accompany him to the Central Committee. I was simply amazed when our car drove into the Kremlin, the admission to which had a very limited circle of people. My surprise increased even more after Yezhov announced that Comrade Stalin would receive us personally. It was my first meeting with the leader. I was thirty, but I never learned to control my emotions. I was beside myself with joy and could hardly believe that the head of the country wanted to meet with an ordinary operative worker. After Stalin shook my hand, I couldn't bring myself to answer his questions clearly. Smiling, Stalin remarked:

"Don't worry, young man. Report key facts. We only have twenty minutes.

- Comrade Stalin, - I answered, - for an ordinary member of the party, a meeting with you - the greatest event in life. I understand that I was called here on business. In a minute I will pull myself together and be able to report the main facts to you and Comrade Yezhov.

Stalin nodded and asked me about the relationship between the political figures in the Ukrainian émigré movement. I briefly described the fruitless discussions between

Ukrainian nationalist politicians on the question of which of them will play what role in the future government. The real threat, however, was Konovalets, since he was actively preparing to participate in the war against us along with the Germans. The weakness of his position was the constant pressure on him and the organization he headed by the Polish authorities, who wanted to direct the Ukrainian national movement in Galicia against Soviet Ukraine.

- Your suggestions? Stalin asked.

Yezhov remained silent. Me too. Then, plucking up my courage, I said that now
ready to answer.

"Then in a week," Stalin remarked, "submit your proposals.

The audience is over. He shook hands with us and we left the office.

Returning to the Lubyanka, Yezhov immediately instructed me to immediately begin work with Shpigelglas on our proposals. The next day, Slutsky, as head of the Foreign Department, sent a prepared note to Yezhov. It was a plan for intensive implementation in the OUN, primarily in Germany. For this, in particular, it was proposed to send three employees of the Ukrainian NKVD as students to the Nazi party school. It seemed necessary to us to send along with them, as a safety net, one genuine Ukrainian nationalist, preferably not too smart at the same time. Yezhov did not ask a single question and only said that Comrade Stalin had given instructions to consult with Comrades Kosior and Petrovsky, who might have their own ideas. I was to leave immediately for Kyiv, speak with them, and return to Moscow the next day.

Our conversation took place in Kosior's office, where Petrovsky was also present. Both of them showed interest in our proposed double game. However, most of all they were concerned about the then proposed proclamation of an independent Carpathian Ukrainian Republic. Exactly one week after my return to Moscow, Yezhov again brought me to Stalin's office at eleven o'clock in the evening. This time Petrovsky was there, which did not surprise me. In just five minutes, I outlined a plan of operational measures against the OUN, emphasizing that the main goal was to infiltrate the Abwehr through Ukrainian channels, since the Abwehr is our main enemy in the upcoming war.

Stalin asked Petrovsky to speak. He solemnly announced that in Ukraine Konovalets had been sentenced to death in absentia for the gravest crimes against the Ukrainian proletariat: he ordered and personally supervised the execution of the revolutionary workers of the Kiev "Arsenal" in January 1918.

Stalin, interrupting him, said:

- This is not an act of revenge, although Konovalets is an agent of German fascism. Our goal is to decapitate the movement of Ukrainian fascism on the eve of the war and force these bandits to destroy each other in the struggle for power." Immediately he turned to me with a question: "What are the tastes, weaknesses and affections of Konovalets?" Try them
use.

"Konovalets loves chocolates very much," I answered, adding that wherever we didn't go with him, he always bought a chic box of chocolates everywhere.

"Think about it," suggested Stalin.

During the entire conversation Yezhov did not utter a word. Saying goodbye, Stalin asked me Do I understand correctly the political significance of the combat mission entrusted to me.

"Yes," I replied, and assured him that I would give my life, if necessary, to fulfill
party assignments.

"I wish you success," Stalin said, shaking my hand.

I was ordered to liquidate Konovalets.

After my meeting with Stalin, Slutsky and Shpigelglas developed several variants of the operation.

The first of them assumed that I would shoot Konovalets point-blank. True, it's always

was accompanied by assistant Baranovsky, whose code name is "Pan Engineer". It was almost impossible to find a moment when I would be alone with Konovalts.

The second option was to give him a "valuable gift" with a built-in explosive device. This option seemed the most acceptable: if the clock works as expected, I will have time to leave.

An employee of the department of operational and technical means Timashkov was tasked with making an explosive device that looked like a box of chocolates, painted in the traditional Ukrainian style. The whole problem was that I had to quietly press the switch to start the clockwork. I did not like this option too much, since a bright box would immediately attract the attention of Konovalts. In addition, he could pass this box to Baranovsky, who constantly accompanied him.

Using my cover - I was enlisted as a radio operator on the cargo ship "Shilka" - I met with Konovalts in Antwerp, Rotterdam and Le Havre, where he came with a fake Lithuanian passport in the name of Mr. Novak. In the 1930s, the Lithuanian authorities regularly supplied OUN functionaries with false passports.

The game, which had been going on for more than two years, was about to end. It was the spring of 1938, and war seemed imminent. We knew that during the war Konovalts would lead the OUN and would be on the side of Germany.

On the way, going to meet with Konovalts, I checked the network of our illegal immigrants in Norway, whose task was to prepare sabotage on German and Japanese sea vessels based in Europe and used to supply weapons and raw materials to the Franco regime in Spain. This network was headed by Ernst Wollweber, known to me at that time under the code name "Anton". Under his supervision was, in particular, a group of Poles who had experience in mines with explosives. These people had previously emigrated to France and Belgium due to unemployment in Poland, where we recruited them to participate in sabotage in case of war. I was ordered to check the Polish bombers. Wollweber spoke almost no Polish, but my Western Ukrainian dialect was quite sufficient to communicate with our people. We met with a group of five Polish agents in the Norwegian port of Bergen. I heard a report on the operation on the Polish cargo ship Stefan Batory, bound for Spain with a shipment of strategic materials for Franco. It never reached its destination, sinking in the North Sea after a fire broke out in its hold as a result of a bomb planted by our people.

Wollweber made a strong impression on me. A German Communist, he served in the German Navy and led the sailors' uprising against the Kaiser in 1918. A military tribunal sentenced him to death, but he managed to escape first to Holland and then to Scandinavia. He was later arrested by the Swedish authorities, and the Gestapo immediately demanded his extradition. However, he received Soviet citizenship, so that his deportation from Sweden to German-occupied Norway did not take place. After the Molotov Pact—

Ribbentrop, in 1939, he came to Moscow and was ordered to continue preparing sabotage in the inevitable war with Hitler. The Wollweber organization played an important role in the Norwegian Resistance. Wollweber and his people, who returned to Moscow in 1941-1944, helped us recruit German prisoners of war for our intelligence operations after the outbreak of the war.

After the end of the war, Wollweber headed the Ministry of State Security of the GDR for some time. In 1958, in connection with the conflict that arose between him and Khrushchev, Ulbricht removed Wollweber from his post. And the following happened. Wollweber told Serov, then chairman of the KGB, about the differences among the leadership of the GDR, considering them a manifestation of pro-Western sentiments that ran counter to the line of the international communist movement. Serov reported this conversation to Khrushchev. And he, at a dinner, accompanied by heavy drinking, said to Ulbricht:

- Why do you keep the Minister of State Security, who informs us about ideological differences within your party? This is a continuation of the tradition of Beria and Merkulov, whom Wollweber met in the forties, when he came to Moscow.

Ulbricht understood what had to be done and immediately fired Wollweber for "anti-Party behavior." He died in disgrace in the 60s.

In the end, an explosive device in the form of a box of chocolates was made, and the clock mechanism did not have to be actuated by a special switch. The explosion was supposed to occur exactly half an hour after the change in the position of the box from vertical to horizontal. I was supposed to keep the box in the first position in the big inside pocket of my jacket. I was supposed to gear! this "gift" to Konovalts and leave the premises before the mine goes off.

Spiegelglas escorted me to Yezhov's office, who personally wanted to receive me. before leaving. When we left him, Spiegelglas said:

- In case of failure of the operation and the threat of capture by the enemy, you must act like a real man, so that under no circumstances fall into the hands of police.

In fact, it was an order to die. It meant that I should use the "Walter" pistol he gave me.

Spiegelglas spent more than eight hours with me, discussing various options for me to leave the scene. He provided me with a seasonal train ticket valid for two months throughout Western Europe, and also handed me a fake Czechoslovak passport and three thousand US dollars, which at that time was a lot of money. On his advice, I had to definitely change my appearance after "leaving": buy a hat, a raincoat in the nearest store.

Before leaving Murmansk, I read in Pravda that Slutsky died suddenly of a heart attack. It was a big loss for me. I deeply respected him as an experienced head of intelligence. On a purely human level, he invariably showed attention to me and to Emma. This man had great merit. It was he who at one time managed to steal the technical secret of the production of ball bearings in Sweden. For our industry, this was of the utmost importance. Slutsky was also awarded the Order of the Red Banner. Together with Nikolsky (later known as Orlov), the head of the economic intelligence department, in 1930 or 1931 they met with the Swedish match king Ivar Kruger. Blackmailing him that we would flood the Western markets with our cheap matches, they demanded a compensation sum of three hundred thousand American dollars for the Soviet government. The reception worked, the money was received.

I carefully studied all possible escape routes in those cities where our meeting with Konovalts could take place. For each of them, I had a detailed plan. However, before the last trip to meet with Konovalts, unexpected problems arose. In response to my call from Norway, he suddenly suggested that we meet in Kiel (Germany) or I would fly to him in Italy on a German plane, which he would send for me. I replied that I did not have time: although the captain of the ship was a member of the Ukrainian organization, but this time I was not allowed to leave during the stops for more than five hours. Then we agreed that we would meet in Rotterdam, at the "Atlanta" restaurant, located not far from the central post office, just a ten minute walk from the railway station. Before disembarking at Rotterdam, I told the captain, who was instructed to carry out all my orders, that if I did not return to the ship by four o'clock in the afternoon, she should sail without me. Timashkov, the manufacturer of the explosive device, accompanied me on this trip and loaded it ten minutes before I left the ship. He himself remained on board the ship (Later, Timashkov became the head of the department of operational equipment, it was he who designed magnetic mines: one of them killed the German Gauleiter of Belarus, Wilhelm Kube.

This happened in 1943, and after the end of the Second World War, he served as an adviser to the Greek partisans during the civil war.)

On May 23, 1938, after the last rain, the weather was warm and sunny. The time is ten minutes to twelve. Walking along the alley near the Atlanta restaurant, I saw Konovalts sitting at a table by the window, waiting for my arrival. This time he was alone. I entered the restaurant, sat down to it, and after a short conversation we agreed to meet again in the center of Rotterdam at 17.00. I gave him a gift, a box of chocolates, and said that I had to get back to the ship now. As I left, I placed the box on the table next to him. We shook hands, and I left, holding back my instinctive urge to run immediately.

I remember leaving the restaurant and turning right into a side street lined with numerous shops on both sides. In the first of them, which sold men's clothing, I bought a hat and a light raincoat. As I was leaving the store, I heard a sound like a blown tire. People around me ran towards the restaurant. I hurried to the station, boarded the very first train bound for Paris, where in the morning I was to be met by a person personally known to me in the metro. So that the train crew would not remember me, I got off at a stop an hour from Rotterdam. There, near the Belgian border, I ordered lunch at a local restaurant, but was unable to touch the food due to a terrible headache. I crossed the border in a taxi - the border guards did not pay the slightest attention to my Czech passport. I took the same taxi to Brussels, where I discovered that the next train to Paris had just left. The next one, fortunately, departed fairly soon, and by evening I was already in Paris. Everything went off without a hitch. In Paris, I remember, I was deceived at the exchange office at the station when I exchanged one hundred dollars. I decided that I should not be staying at a hotel in order to avoid registration: the Dutch stamps in my passport, put at the border, might be of interest to the police. The counterintelligence service will probably begin to check everyone who entered France from Holland.

I spent the night walking along the boulevards that surrounded the center of Paris. To kill time, I went to the cinema. Early in the morning, after many hours of walking, I went to the hairdresser's to shave and wash my hair. Then I hurried to the agreed meeting point to be at the metro station by ten in the morning. When I stepped onto the platform, I immediately saw our intelligence officer Agayants, who worked as the third secretary of the Soviet embassy in Paris. He was already leaving, but, noticing me, he immediately returned and made a sign to follow him. We took a taxi to the Bois de Boulogne, where we had breakfast, and I gave him my pistol and a small note, the contents of which were to be sent to Moscow in cipher. The note said: "The gift has been presented. The parcel is now in Paris, and the tire of the car I was traveling with blew while I was shopping." Agayants, who had no idea of my assignment, escorted me to a safe house in the suburbs of Paris, where I stayed for two weeks.

There was not a single line in the newspapers about the incident in Rotterdam. However, Russian émigré newspapers are writing with might and main about the future fate of Yezhov: in their opinion, he is doomed as another victim of the purge campaign. Reading this, I couldn't help but laugh to myself, "How stupid all these articles are. After all, just two months ago, this man wished me success in completing the assignment, and besides, I myself saw that Comrade Stanin completely trusted him.

From Paris, using forged Polish documents, I went by car and train to Barcelona. Local newspapers reported on a strange incident in Rotterdam, where Ukrainian nationalist leader Konovalts, who was traveling on a false passport, was killed in a street explosion. Three versions were put forward in newspaper reports: either he was killed by the Bolsheviks, or by a rival group of Ukrainians, or, finally, he was removed by the Poles - in retaliation for the death of General Peratsky.

Fate would have it that Baranovsky, who arrived an hour after the explosion in

Rotterdam from Germany to meet with Konovalets was arrested by the Dutch police, who suspected him of committing this action, but when he was taken to the hospital and showed the body of the murdered man, he exclaimed: "My Fuhrer!" - and this, coupled with a train ticket, was enough to convince the police of his complete innocence.

The day after the explosion, the Dutch police, accompanied by Baranovsky, checked the crews of all Soviet ships that were in the port of Rotterdam. They were looking for the person in the photo they had. It was the same photo taken by a street photographer in Berlin. Baranovsky knew that Konovalets was going to meet with a courier-radio operator from a Soviet ship that was appearing in Western Europe. However, he was not at all sure that it was me. The Dutch police knew about the telephone call to Konovalets from Norway and naturally suspected that his agent had called. True, no one knew for sure who exactly Konovalets met on that fateful day. When there was an explosion on the street, there was no one near him. His identity remained unidentified by the police until late in the evening, while my ship "Shilka" had long since left the harbor of Rotterdam³.

In Spain I stayed for three weeks as a Polish volunteer in the led by the NKVD of the international partisan unit under the republican army.

EVENTS IN SPAIN

During my stay in Barcelona, I first met Ramón Mercader del Río, a young lieutenant who had just returned from a guerrilla mission behind Francoist lines. A charming young man - at that time he was only twenty years old. His older brother, as I was told, died heroically in battle: having tied himself with grenades, he rushed under a German tank that broke through to the positions of the Republicans. Their mother Caridad was also highly respected in the Republican guerrilla underground, showing miracles of bravery in combat operations. Then I did not even suspect what kind of future was prepared for Mercader: after all, he was destined to liquidate Trotsky, and it was I who had to lead this operation.

During the years 1936-1939 in Spain there was, in fact, not one, but two wars, both not for life, but for death. One war clashed between the nationalist forces led by Franco, assisted by Hitler, and the forces of the Spanish Republicans, assisted by the Soviet Union. The second, completely separate war was fought inside the Republican camp. On the one hand, Stalin is in the Soviet Union, and on the other, Trotsky, who was in exile: both wanted to appear before the world as saviors and guarantors of the cause of the republicans, in order to thereby become at the forefront of the world communist movement.

We sent both our young, inexperienced operatives and experienced professional instructors to Spain. This country has become a kind of testing ground where our future military and intelligence operations were tested and practiced. Many of the subsequent moves by Soviet intelligence relied on the contacts established in Spain and on the conclusions that we were able to draw from our Spanish experience. Yes, the Republicans in Spain were defeated, but the people who worked for the Soviet Union became our permanent allies in the fight against fascism. When the civil war

The death of Konovalets caused a split in the OUN. The fate of the leaders of the OUN, who worked under Konovalets, developed in 1939-1945 tragically. During the struggle for power within the OUN between Bandera, who was liberated by the Germans in 1939, and Konovalets official successor Melnik, prominent militants and associates of Konovalets died. Bandera shot Baranovsky, Stsiborsky, Gribovsky, Sushko in Zhytomyr and Lvov in 1942-1943. The militant Lemek was liquidated by them in Poltava in 1942. (Author's note.)

this country ended, it became clear: there is no more room for Trotsky in the world.

In Spain, my new meeting also took place with Eitingon, one of the prominent leaders of Soviet intelligence in the 1920s and 1950s. I met him five years ago when he headed the 1st branch (illegal intelligence) of the Foreign Department⁴. In Spain, Eitingon, Major of State Security,⁵ was responsible for conducting guerrilla operations behind Francoist lines and infiltrating agents at the top of the Fascist movement. His pseudonym in Spain was "General Kotov", and in the Center he went by the names "Tom" and "Pierre". It was Eitingon, following the instructions of the Center, who organized my return to Moscow in 1938. He accompanied me to Le Havre and put me on board a Soviet ship. I still remember what he looked like: look at him and think that this is an ordinary French street vendor - without a tie, in an unchanged cap, which he wore even in the heat.

Naum Isaakovich Eitingon was born on December 6, 1899 in Belarus, in the city of Shklov, not far from Gomel, where my wife was from. At Lubyanka and among friends he was called Leonid Aleksandrovich, since in the 1920s Jewish Chekists took Russian names for themselves so as not to attract their attention to their nationality, both among informers and informers from circles of the nobility and former officers, and colleagues with whom they worked.

The Eitingon family belonged to the poorest sections of society, but in Europe they had very wealthy relatives.

Eitingon joined the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in 1917. A year later, at the age of nineteen, he joined the Red Army and was soon assigned to work in the Cheka. In 1919 he was appointed deputy chairman of the Cheka of the Gomel region. He left the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and joined the Bolsheviks in 1920. Eitingon's career began when he took an active part in suppressing the uprising of the White Guard officers in Gomel, during which they managed to briefly capture the city.

Dzerzhinsky noticed a young security officer and sent him to lead the Cheka in Bashkiria to suppress banditry. There, in a battle with local bandits, he was wounded in the leg and often complained to me afterwards of pain in the leg. In 1921 he was sent to Moscow to the military academy, where he studied with future military commanders. I remember he showed me photographs showing him with Chuikov, later Marshal, defender of Stalingrad.

After completing his studies at the military academy, Eitingon was sent to work in the Foreign Department of the OGPU. The European relatives refused to comply with his request to send the necessary recommendations, papers and money for a trip to Western Europe. And this could be his legal cover for operational work. As a result, Eitingon was sent to China as a resident of the OGPU: first to Shanghai (where he worked together with the network of the Red Army Intelligence Agency, which also included Richard Sorge as one of the agents), and then to Beijing and Harbin. Eitingon managed to achieve the release of a group of Soviet military advisers captured by the Chinese nationalists in Manchuria. He carried out another operation with equal success, foiling an attempt by Chiang Kai-shek's agents to seize

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Eitingon in the 1920s and 1930s led a network of agents abroad, not connected with official representatives of Soviet organizations and missions abroad.

5

Until 1945, the Soviet state security agencies had a special system of military ranks, distinct from the Red Army. The military rank of major (rhombus on the buttonholes) roughly corresponded to the rank of brigade commander. It was below the rank of "commissar of state security", which was later equated with the rank of "major general".

Soviet consulate in Shanghai. After that, he was recalled to Moscow. For a short time in 1930, Eitingon became the deputy of Serebryansky, head of the Special Group under the chairman of the OGPU. This independent intelligence center, independent of the Foreign Department, was created by Menzhinsky, Dzerzhinsky's successor, in 1926 as a parallel intelligence service for the deep penetration of agents into objects of a military-strategic nature and the preparation of sabotage operations in Western Europe and Japan in case of war. To this end, Eitingon traveled from China to the United States (California) to organize an agent network there. In 1932, Eitingon was transferred to the Foreign Department, headed by Artuzov, and later Slutsky, as head of the department that coordinated the work of illegal residencies. Along with this, he was also responsible for the production of fake passports for covert operations abroad.

When we first met him in Moscow in 1933, I was the new inspector in the personnel department. At that time, we were not particularly close, since he was in a higher position than I was. In his person I saw an experienced head of intelligence, respected for success in work and professional excellence, so he was entrusted with work with illegal immigrants - the holy of holies in our business. In those years, this work was of the utmost importance, since we had relatively few residencies under diplomatic cover. We tried to ensure that our agents, in case of failure, could not direct Western intelligence services to Soviet embassies abroad.

Eitingon's handsome face and his lively brown eyes shone with intelligence. His eyes were piercing, his hair thick and jet black, the scar on his chin from a car accident (which most people thought was a battle wound) all gave him the air of a seasoned man. He literally charmed people by quoting Pushkin's poems by heart, but his main weapons were irony and humor. He drank little
a glass of cognac was enough for him for the whole evening. I immediately noticed that this man did not at all look like a high-ranking, arrogant bureaucrat. Eitingon's complete lack of interest in money and comfort in everyday life was simply amazing. He never had any savings, and even the modest furnishings in the apartment were state-owned.

I remember one time I brought him the personal file of a young security officer who served near the Polish border, with a request, if possible, to transfer him to work as one of the employees of the department that Eitingon led. The file contained a note from the deputy head of the Ukrainian GPU department, recommending him for service in Poland, not far from the place where he lived and worked. Eitingon did not want to send this young man to Poland, near the border, where he might be recognized. And he commented like this: "If this guy with no experience is caught in a routine check, then whose head will go? If I begin to listen to such recommendations, it will be necessary to have a special basket for collecting heads."

I decided that the matter was closed and he did not want to be disturbed about the device of this person. But unexpectedly, Eitingon himself called Minsker, who headed the department for the Far East, and offered him to hire this employee.

Our next meeting, operational, was already in Spain, from where he illegally transported me to France in 1938 after the liquidation of Konovalts. Eitingon had been sent to Spain two years earlier as a deputy resident in charge of guerrilla operations, including railroad and airfield sabotage. After Nikolsky, our resident in Spain (under the name Alexander Orlov), disappeared in July 1938, Eitingon became a resident. I could not help but appreciate the skill with which he adapted to local conditions.

After Franco won the Spanish Civil War in 1939, Eitingon moved to France, where he spent several months reorganizing and restoring everything that was left of his intelligence network, and kept in touch with Guy Burges, one of

members of the Cambridge group, code-named "The Girl". Then Burges was transferred to Gorsky, the resident of the NKVD in England, for communication. Around the same time, Eitingon managed to attract the nephew of the head of the Spanish fascist party, Primo de Riveira, a friend of Hitler, to cooperate with Soviet intelligence. Until 1942, he was an important source of information about the plans of Franco and Hitler. In 1938, the Center was literally enraged by the flight of our resident in Spain, Orlov. We soon learned that he had fled for fear of arrest. However, Eitingon suggested, despite Orlov's betrayal, to continue contacts with members of the Cambridge group, since Orlov, living in the United States, could not betray his connections with these people without the risk of exposing himself to prosecution. In 1934-1935, Orlov lived in England on a fake American passport, so if American counterintelligence had checked the Cambridge group, Orlov might not have received American citizenship and would have been deported from the United States. Moreover, undesirable facts would have surfaced for him: terrorist operations under his leadership and with his participation against Trotskyists and NKVD agents suspected of playing a double game in Spain.

In 1941, Eitingon was sent to Turkey and stayed there for almost the entire year 1942 under the name of Leonid Naumov. There he prepared an assassination attempt on Franz von Papen, then the German ambassador to Turkey. According to rumors, von Papen was to head the German government if Hitler was removed from power by Wehrmacht generals. This opened the way to a separate peace between Germany, England and the USA. The assassination attempt was unsuccessful - our Bulgarian agent was nervous, and the bomb exploded ahead of time in his hands. As a result, he himself died, and von Papen escaped with only light scratches.

In later years, my wife and Eitingon turned out to be much more realistic in their assessment of our arrangements than I was. I remember Leonid often saying, for example, that the party is no longer a detachment of like-minded people devoted to socialist ideas and the principles of justice, but has become just a machine for governing the country. At first, his jokes about the country's leadership upset me, but then I got used to them and began to understand how right he was in believing that our leaders put their own selfish interests above the interests of the people and the Soviet state. His wife, however, always scolded Eitingon as soon as he complained about the inflated privileges of the Kremlin leadership. "On the one hand," she said, "I agree with you. Too many people use them, most of them for nothing and certainly not for their hard work. Do not forget, however, that both you and your family received benefits and, just like us, did not think to refuse them.

In the last years of his life, Eitingon was married to Puzyreva, the only woman in the KGB who was awarded the British order.

Eitingon was arrested a second time with me in the wave that followed the removal of Beria from power in 1953, and was released only in 1964. Eitingon died in 1981 without being rehabilitated - officially he was considered just a criminal released. Only in April 1992 did the family receive a certificate of his posthumous rehabilitation.

Leonid was a truly gifted person and, if he had not become a scout, he would certainly have succeeded in public service or made a scientific career. Until now, a joke lives in my memory: "Under our system, there is only one, however, also not guaranteed, opportunity not to end your days in prison. You don't have to be a Jew or a security general."

In 1992, Eitingon's daughter Svetlana called me on the phone and asked me to receive her distant relative from England, who had come to Moscow to collect materials for a book about the Eitingons. During our meeting in May 1992, I learned from her that branches of the Eitingon "clan" could be found in Belarus, Moscow, New York and Leipzig. However, relatives who moved from Europe to America and enjoyed special fur trade privileges from the Soviet Union did not play any role in

professional career of Eitingon, and he did not maintain contact with them even after his release from Vladimir prison.

The reports that appeared earlier in the West, in which Eitingon was credited with an important role in the kidnapping operation in Paris in 1937 of General Miller, the head of the ROVS (Russian All-Military Union), do not correspond to reality. He was abducted with the participation of General Skoblin (code name "Farmer"), who emigrated to Paris, who acted under the direct supervision of Spiegelglas. Skoblin managed to lure Miller to the safe house of the NKVD, where he was supposed to meet with German intelligence officers. There he was arrested. In connection with the disappearance of Miller, the French authorities protested strongly to the Soviet ambassador to France, insisting that he had in fact been kidnapped and taken aboard a Soviet ship. They even threatened to send their own destroyer to intercept a Soviet ship at sea. Our Ambassador Surits categorically denied all accusations, warning the French that they would be held responsible if a peaceful Soviet vessel was stopped and searched by them in international waters. In any case, according to the ambassador, General Miller will not be found there anyway. As a result, the Soviet ship was not detained and safely made its way from Le Havre to Leningrad. Miller was taken to Moscow, where he was interrogated, he refused to sign an appeal to the white emigration to stop the fight against Soviet power, was tried and shot in 1939 at the Lubyanka. His kidnapping made a lot of noise at that time. The fact that the general was neutralized led to the collapse of the entire organization of the former tsarist officers, frustrating their plans for cooperation with the Germans in the war against us.

Skoblin fled from Paris to Spain on a plane ordered for him by Orlov (when Orlov fled in 1938, he kept Skoblin's gold ring as evidence of his involvement in the case). Skoblin himself died during an air raid on Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. His wife was the famous Russian singer Nadezhda Plevitskaya, who kept in touch with the NKVD. She was unaware that Spiegelglas was in charge of the operation to capture Miller and considered him a friend of her husband. She only knew that Spiegelglas ("Douglas") was connected with the Soviet representatives and supported them financially. She was arrested in France for her complicity in Miller's kidnapping and sentenced to twenty years hard labor. She died in prison in 1944. If Skoblin had carried out this operation, as some "experts" in the history of our intelligence write, with the knowledge of the Germans, then Plevitskaya would have been released by them, or, in any case, the Germans would definitely have tried to use it to get in touch with our intelligence in France.

But let us return to the events of 1938. Having received my message from Paris about the successful completion of the operation to liquidate Konovalts, Shpigelglas called my wife to him and said: "Andrei (my code name) is safe. He saw how people rushed to the scene, and everything became clear to him. After all, in Western Europe, no one will run to look at a car tire that has burst nearby."

In July 1938, the ship I was on landed in the port of Leningrad. I immediately took the night train to Moscow. I was met at the station by Passov, who had just been appointed to replace Slutsky, Shpigelglas, and my wife. I was congratulated and hugged. Needless to say, how happy I was to return to Moscow to my former life. I considered the liquidation of Konovalts justified from all points of view and was proud that no innocent people were injured in the explosion. Neither the Abwehr nor the organization of Ukrainian nationalists had evidence to reveal the true reasons for the death of Konovalts. Of course, they could have suspected a courier or messenger who had come to the meeting in Rotterdam, but there was no proof in their hands.

There was another important circumstance that convinced me that the work had been done correctly. The nationalist leaders I encountered in Berlin and Warsaw belonged to the so-called "pro-Western" Ukrainians, who already had a poor command of their native language, hindering

Ukrainian words with German ones, and I often had to correct them. These people, I sincerely believed, were doomed by history itself. Completely cut off from real life in Ukraine, they did not understand the essence and strength of the Soviet system. Nor did they know about the rise of Ukrainian literature and art. They received their education mainly in Vienna or Prague. Ukrainian culture and language in Polish Galicia at that time were ruthlessly suppressed by the local authorities. Regularly following the periodicals, they nevertheless could not explain the difference between collective farms and state farms or understand the relationship of various state and public organizations responsible for social policy in Ukraine. They claimed that their views were supported by the rural population and consumer cooperatives, not knowing that in reality consumer cooperatives in the countryside had long become an integral attribute of the collective farm system.

The next day, early in the morning, I was called to Beria, the new head of the Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD, Yezhov's first deputy. Before that, I only knew about Beria that he headed the GPU of Georgia in the 20s, and then became the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. Passov, who had succeeded Slutsky as head of the Foreign Department, took me to Beria's office next to Yezhov's waiting room. My first meeting with Beria lasted, it seems, for about four hours. All this time, Passov kept silent. Beria asked me question after question, wanting to know about all the details of the operation against Konovalts and about the OUN from the beginning of its activity.

An hour later, Beria ordered that Passov bring a folder with a lettered file "Stavka", where all the details of this operation were recorded. From Beria's questions, it became clear to me that he was a highly competent person in matters of intelligence work and sabotage. Later I realized that Beria was asking his questions in order to better understand how I was able to fit into Western life.

Beria was particularly impressed by the seemingly simple procedure for acquiring seasonal railway tickets, which allowed me to travel freely throughout Western Europe. I remember how he was interested in the technique of selling railway tickets for passengers on domestic lines and on foreign routes. In Holland, Belgium and France, passengers traveling to other countries approached the cashier one at a time - and only after the call from the attendant. We assumed that this was done for a specific purpose, namely to allow the cashier to better remember who purchased the tickets. Further, Beria asked if I had paid attention to the number of exits, including the spare one, at the safe house, which was located in the suburbs of Paris. He was rather surprised that I did not do this, because I was too tired. From this I concluded that Beria had experience in the underground, acquired in the Transcaucasian Cheka.

He was dressed, I remember, in a very modest suit. It seemed strange to me that he was without a tie, and the sleeves of his shirt, by the way, were of quite good quality, rolled up. This circumstance made me feel a little uneasy, as I was wearing a perfectly tailored suit: during my brief stay in Paris, I ordered three fashionable suits, a coat, and several shirts and ties. The tailor took measurements, and Agayants came to pick up the things and sent them to Moscow by diplomatic mail.

Beria showed great interest in the subversive partisan detachment based in Barcelona. He personally knew Vasilevsky, one of the partisan commanders - at one time he served under him in the counterintelligence of the Georgian GPU. Beria spoke good Russian with a slight Georgian accent and behaved extremely politely towards me. However, he failed to remain unperturbed throughout our conversation. So, Beria became very excited when I told what arguments Konovalts gave to dissuade him from carrying out terrorist acts by the OUN against representatives of the Soviet government in Ukraine. I objected to him, referring to the fact that this could lead to the death of the entire Ukrainian nationalist underground, since the NKVD would quickly attack the trail of terrorists. Konovalts believed that

such acts may be carried out by isolated groups. This, he insisted, would give them a halo of heroism in the eyes of the local population, serve as an incentive to launch a broad anti-Soviet campaign, in which Germany and Japan would intervene.

Being nearsighted, Beria wore pince-nez, which made him look like a modest co-worker. Probably, I thought, he deliberately chose this image for himself: in Moscow no one knows him, and people, naturally, when they meet, do not fix their attention on becoming an ordinary appearance, which gives him the opportunity, visiting safe houses for conversations with agents, to remain unrecognized. It must be remembered that in those years some of the safe houses in Moscow maintained by the NKVD were located in communal apartments. Later, I learned that the first thing Beria did when he became Yezhov's deputy was to connect himself with the most valuable agents who had previously been in contact with the heads of the leading departments and departments of the NKVD, who were repressed.

I got five days' leave to visit my mother, who was still living in Melitopol, and then my wife's parents in Kharkov. It was assumed that, returning to Moscow, I would receive the post of assistant to the head of the Foreign Department. Spiegelglas and Passov were delighted with my meeting with Beria and, seeing me off at the Kievsky railway station, they assured me that upon my return to Moscow, I would also be entrusted with the direct supervision of reconnaissance and sabotage work in Spain.

During the trip, my wife told me about the tragic events that had taken place in the country and in the security agencies. Yezhov carried out the most severe repressions: he arrested the entire leadership of the counterintelligence of the NKVD in 1937. In 1938, repressions reached the Foreign Department. Many of our friends became victims, whom we completely trusted and whose loyalty we did not doubt. We think even then that this became possible due to Yezhov's criminal incompetence, which became obvious even to ordinary operatives.

Here I would like to cite a fact that, for all its importance, is not mentioned in books devoted to the history of the Soviet special services. Before Yezhov came to the NKVD, there was no unit involved in the investigation, that is, the investigative unit. The operative under Dzerzhinsky (as well as Menzhinsky), working with agents and informants of the supervised area, had to conduct the investigation, interrogations, and prepare indictments himself. Under Yezhov and Beria, a special investigative unit was created, which literally knocked out testimonies from those arrested about "criminal activity", which had nothing to do with reality. Operational workers who supervised specific objects of industry and the state apparatus had more or less clear ideas about the personnel of these institutions and organizations. The cadres of the investigative unit who came on the party call, mostly young without life experience, from the very beginning were involved in a vicious circle. They operated on confessions knocked out from the defendants. Not knowing the basics of operational work, checking real materials, they turned out to be accomplices in the criminal massacre of innocent people, committed at the initiative of the highest and middle levels of the country's leadership. As a result, a whole wave of arrests arose, caused by the inflamed imagination of investigators and "evidence" knocked out of those under investigation. We all hoped that with the appointment of Beria in December 1938 as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, due to his high professionalism and in connection with the well-known decision of the Central Committee, the excesses that had been committed would be corrected. It is clear that this hope was naive, but at that time we sincerely believed in the decency and unconditional honesty of our immediate supervisors. We knew, for example, that Slutsky and Shpigelglas were sending from Moscow and accommodating the wives and children of some of our colleagues who had been arrested so that they, in turn, did not become victims of repression.

From the trip I returned to Moscow rather puzzled by the rumors about the atrocities in Ukraine, which we heard from our relatives. I could not bring myself to believe, for example, that Khataevich, who by that time had become secretary of the Central Committee

Communist Party of Ukraine, was an enemy of the people. Kosior, allegedly in contact with the Communist Party of Poland dissolved by the Comintern, was arrested in Moscow. The real reason for all these arrests, I thought at the time, was that they actually made mistakes. In particular, Khataevich, during the mass famine, gave consent to the sale of flour, which was an emergency reserve in case of war. For this, in 1934, he received a reprimand from Moscow along the party line. Maybe, I thought, he had made some other mistake of the same kind. I repeat again: alas, I was naive.

In Moscow, Passov and Shpigelglas informed me that a new assignment awaited me... the position of assistant to the head of the Foreign Department. This appointment, however, was still subject to the approval of the Central Committee of the party, since it was a question of a leading position that was part of the nomenklatura. And although there was no order for my new appointment, in fact, from August to November 1938, I performed these duties.

The start of my new job was not a good one. I quickly realized that my boss, Passov, had no operational experience abroad. For him, the recruitment of agents in the West and contacts with them were a real "terra incognita". He completely trusted any information received from agents, and had no idea about the methods of verifying reports from foreign sources. The experience of his operational work in counterintelligence and in the field of investigative actions against "enemies of the people" could not help him. I was horrified to learn that he had signed a directive that allowed each operative officer of the overseas station to use his own cipher and bypass the resident to send messages directly to the Center if he could have reason not to trust his immediate superior. Only later did it become clear why such a document was born. At the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in March 1937, the NKVD was required to "strengthen the cadres" of the Foreign Department. The criminality of this demand lay in the fact that it covered the desire of the country's leadership to get rid of the old leadership of the Soviet intelligence agencies that had become objectionable.

In 1936, the Spanish Republicans agreed to deposit the bulk of Spain's gold reserves, worth more than half a billion dollars, to Moscow. In the autumn of 1938, Agayants sent a telegram from Paris to the Center, in which he reported that far from all Spanish gold, precious metals and stones had been sent to Moscow. The telegram indicated that allegedly some of these stocks were squandered by the republican government with the participation of the leadership of the NKVD station in Spain.

The telegram immediately revived Stalin and Molotov, who ordered Beria to verify the information. However, when we turned to Eitingon, a resident in Spain, for an explanation of the circumstances of this case, he sent back an indignant telegram, consisting almost of curses. "I," he wrote, "are not an accountant or a clerk. It is time for the Center to resolve the issue of confidence in Dolores Ibarruri, José Diaz, me and other Spanish comrades who risk their lives every day in the anti-fascist war in the name of a common cause. All requests should be forwarded to the trusted representatives of the leadership of the Central Committee of the French and Spanish Communist Parties, Jacques Duclos, Dolores Ibarruri and others. At the same time, one must understand that the export of gold and valuables took place in the conditions of hostilities."

Eitingon's telegram made a great impression on Stalin and Beria. An order followed: to understand the relationship between the employees of the NKVD residency in France and Spain.

I also received a personal assignment from Beria to familiarize myself with all the documents on the transfer and acceptance of Spanish valuables to the Gokhran of the USSR. But this was easier said than done, since Molotov had to sign the permission to work with Gokhran materials. Meanwhile, his assistant refused to submit a document for signature without a visa for Yezhov, People's Commissar of the NKVD - the signature of Beria alone was then not enough. At that time, I was completely unfamiliar with all these bureaucratic rules and passed the document to Yezhov through his secretariat. The next morning it still hadn't been signed.

Beria scolded me on the phone for being slow, but I replied that I could not find Yezhov - he is not in the Lubyanka. Beria angrily threw:

"This is not a personal, but an urgent state matter. Send a courier to Yezhov's dacha, he is not well and is there.

His irreverent tone towards Yezhov, a candidate member of the Politburo, somewhat puzzled and surprised me.

Together with a courier, we were taken to the dacha of the people's commissar in Ozyory, not far from Moscow. Yezhov looked somehow strange: it seemed to me that I was giving a document for signature either to a terminally ill person, or to a person who had been drinking all night long. He endorsed the paper without asking a single question and without expressing his attitude to this matter in any way. I immediately went to the Kremlin to hand over the document to the government secretariat. From there I went to Gokhran, accompanied by two auditors, one of whom, Verenzon, had been the chief accountant of the Cheka-NKVD since 1918. Before the revolution, he held the position of auditor in the Russian insurance company, the premises of which were occupied by Dzerzhinsky.

The auditors worked in the Gokhran for two weeks, checking all available documentation. No traces of shortage were found. Neither gold nor jewelry was used for operational purposes by NKVD residents in Spain and France in 1936-1938. It was then that I learned that the document on the transfer of gold was signed by the Prime Minister of the Spanish Republic, Francisco Largo Caballero, and the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, who was later shot as an enemy of the people along with Bukharin after a show trial in 1938.

The gold was smuggled out of Spain on a Soviet freighter that brought the treasure from Cartagena, the Spanish naval base, to Odessa and then placed in the vaults of the State Bank. At the time, its total cost was estimated at \$518 million. Other valuables intended for the operational needs of the Spanish government of the Republicans in order to finance covert operations were illegally taken from Spain to France, and from there delivered to Moscow as diplomatic cargo.

Spanish gold largely covered our expenses for military and material assistance to the Republicans in their war with Franco and Hitler and Mussolini who supported him, as well as to support the Spanish emigration. These funds were also useful for financing intelligence operations on the eve of the war in Western Europe in 1939.

However, the issue of gold after Orlov's revelations in 1953-1954 received a new development. The Spanish government of Franco has repeatedly raised the issue of compensation for the exported valuables. Eitingon and I were interrogated about the fate of the gold by KGB intelligence officers in 1950-1960, when we were in prison. As a result, as I was informed, a decision was made "at the top" in the 1960s to compensate the Spanish authorities for the gold reserves lost in 1937 by supplying oil to Spain at clearing prices.

In July 1938, on the eve of the escape of Orlov, our resident in Spain, rumors circulated that he would soon replace Passov as head of NKVD intelligence. However, the arrest of his son-in-law, Katsnelson, Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, who was repressed in 1937 or 1938, frightened Orlov.

The real name of Orlov-Nikolsky is Feldbin, aka "Swede" or "Leva" in the materials of operational correspondence. In the West, however, he became known as Alexander Orlov. I met him both in the West and in the Center, but fleetingly. Nevertheless, I consider it important to dwell on this figure in more detail, since it was his revelations in the 50s and 60s that greatly contributed to understanding the nature of the repressions of 1937 in the Soviet Union. By the way, contrary to his assertion, Orlov was never a general of the NKVD. In fact, he had the rank of major of state security, a special rank equated in 1945 with the rank of colonel. In the early 30s, Orlov headed the economic intelligence department of the Foreign Department of the OGPU, was a member

secret contacts and connections with Western businessmen and played an important role in the export of new foreign technology from Germany and Sweden to the Union.

In addition, Orlov was also a talented journalist. He was not in Moscow when there were arrests and reprisals in 1934-1937, but his book version of these events was accepted by the public as true. Some of our authors even use this version even today to describe the atrocities of the Stalinist regime. Of course, there is a lot of truth in what he wrote, but we must remember: this man was not very aware of the real events.

Orlov was fluent in English, German and French. He played very successfully on the German stock market. He wrote an intelligent textbook for the higher special school of the NKVD on attracting foreigners to agent cooperation. Raisa Sobol, my wife's closest friend, who became a well-known writer Irina Guro, worked in the economic department of the GPU under him in the 1920s and highly valued him. From among his informants, Orlov managed to create an unofficial audit group, which revealed the true income of the Nepmen. This secret revision service of Orlov was personally led by Slutsky, at that time the head of the economic department, who then, having become the head of the Foreign Department, transferred Orlov to serve in foreign intelligence. In 1934-1935, Orlov was an illegal resident in London, he managed to consolidate ties with the now world-famous group: Philby, McClean, Burges, Cairncross, Blunt, and others.

In August 1936, he was sent to Spain after a tragic love affair with a young NKVD officer, Galina Voitova. She shot herself right in front of the Lubyanka building, after Orlov left her, refusing to divorce his wife. Slutsky, his close friend, immediately nominated him for the post of resident in Spain just before Yezhov's appointment as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs in September 1936. Orlov was entrusted with the most important secret tasks, one of which was the successful delivery of gold from the Spanish Republic to Moscow. For this daring operation, he was promoted. The Pravda newspaper reported that senior major of state security Nikolsky was being awarded the Order of Lenin for completing an important government assignment. The same issue of the newspaper reported that Major Naumov (actually

Eitingon) is awarded the Order of the Red Banner, and State Security Captain Vasilevsky is awarded the Order of the Red Star.

Orlov was also highly respected by Shpigelglas. He often visited Spain and told me that Orlov, who was there, did an excellent job of recruiting important agents.

By the way, Orlov played a prominent role in the liquidation of the leader of the Spanish Trotskyists Andrei Nin. Nin was arrested by the republican authorities for participating in the Trotskyist uprising in Barcelona, and then kidnapped by Orlov from prison and killed near Barcelona. Then Orlov wrote an anti-Trotskyist pamphlet, distributing it on behalf of Andrei Nin, and recognized the version accepted by the official authorities about the assistance of the German special services to Nin's escape from custody. This action caused serious damage to the prestige of the Trotskyist movement in Spain. Yezhov directly reported to Stalin about the successful disinformation actions of Orlov and the liquidation of the Trotskyists in Spain.

In July 1938, Shpigelglas, as planned in advance, was to meet with Orlov aboard a Soviet ship in Belgian territorial waters to receive a regular report. Spiegelglas suspected that the French and Belgian secret services had reason to detain him, since a year earlier they had arrested some of his agents who were involved in the kidnapping of the White Guard General Miller. For this reason, Spiegelglas was afraid to go ashore. Orlov, on the other hand, was afraid of something completely different: he suspected that the meeting on the ship was set up in order to capture him and arrest him. He never showed up for the meeting with Spiegelglas.

Orlov disappeared, and only in November did we learn that he had turned up in America. Before this happened, I signed the so-called "orientation" on his search,

which was to be transmitted through our channels to all residencies. This document contained a full description of Orlov and his habits, as well as a description of his wife and daughter, who were last seen with him in France. The orientation indicated the reason for the possible disappearance of Orlov and his family - their abduction by one of the special services: British, German or French. In particular, I emphasized the fact that Orlov was known to the French and British authorities as an expert of the Soviet delegation, who participated, moreover, twice, in the work of the International Committee for Non-Intervention in the Civil War in Spain. Another reason could be his treason: sixty thousand dollars destined for operational purposes disappeared from the safe of the residency in Barcelona. His disappearance worried us also because Orlov was well aware of our intelligence network in England, France, Germany and, of course, in Spain.

In November 1938, Beria called me and, giving instructions, unexpectedly ordered to stop the further search for Orlov. I had to resume the search only on his direct instructions. Orlov, it turns out, sent a letter from America personally to Stalin and Yezhov, in which he explained his flight by the fact that he feared the inevitable arrest on board a Soviet ship.

The letter also stated that in the event of attempts to find out his whereabouts or establish surveillance on him, he would instruct his lawyer to release documents he had placed in a safe in a Swiss bank. They contained information about the falsification of materials handed over to the International Committee for Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War. Orlov also threatened to tell the whole story related to the export of Spanish gold, its secret delivery to Moscow, with reference to the relevant documents. This revelation would have embarrassed both the Soviet government and the many Spanish refugees, since Soviet military support for the Republicans in the Civil War was considered officially disinterested. The payment we received in the form of gold and jewels was surrounded by secrecy. Orlov asked Stalin not to persecute his elderly mother, who remained in Moscow, and if his conditions were accepted, he would not reveal the foreign agents known to him and the secrets of the NKVD, which he knew.

I do not believe that the reason why Orlov did not betray the Cambridge group or the circumstances of the kidnapping of General Miller was his loyalty to the Soviet authorities. It was just about survival.

In August 1938, I first learned about the kidnappings and liquidation of Trotskyists and defectors carried out by the OGPU-NKVD in Europe in the 1930s. In this regard, the case of Reiss (real name Poretzky), an intelligence officer of an illegal immigrant sent to Western Europe, deserves some clarification. He received large sums of money for which he could not account, and Reiss feared that he might become a victim of repression. He took the money intended for operational purposes and fled. He deposited money in one of the American banks. Before his escape in 1937, Reiss wrote a letter to the Soviet embassy in France denouncing Stalin. This letter later appeared in one of the Trotskyist publications and became fatal for him, although it was clear from the Reiss dossier that he never sympathized with either Trotsky himself or any of the groups that supported him. Nevertheless, after this letter appeared in the Trotskyist press, Reiss was sentenced to death in absentia.

Reiss led a rather hectic life, and Spiegelglas's network of agents in Paris very soon spotted him. The liquidation was carried out by two agents: a Bulgarian (our illegal immigrant) Afanasiev and his brother-in-law Pravdin in Switzerland. They sat down with him at a table in a small restaurant in the suburbs of Lausanne. Reiss enjoyed drinking with two Bulgarians who pretended to be businessmen. Afanasiev and Pravdin imitated a quarrel with Reiss, pushed him out of the restaurant and, stuffing him into their car, took him away. Three kilometers from this place, they shot Reiss, leaving the corpse on the side of the road.

roads.

I received Afanasyev and Pravdin at a safe house in Moscow, where they returned after completing their assignment. Together with them was Spiegelglas, who supervised them. Afanasiev and Pravdin were awarded orders. By special government decree, Pravdin's mother, who lived in Paris, received a lifelong pension. Afanasiev became an intelligence officer and served until 1953, while Pravdin joined the Foreign Literature Publishing House in Moscow, where he worked until his death in 1970. In my opinion, it should be clarified: the rumors that Sergei Efron, the husband of the poetess Marina Tsvetaeva, was one of those who brought the NKVD to Reiss, is pure fiction. Efron, who worked for the NKVD in Paris, did not have any information about the whereabouts of Reiss.

Another episode that also requires comments concerns Atabekov. In the 1920s, Atabekov was a resident of the OGPU in Istanbul. He became a defector because of his closeness to Blumkin, who was accused of sympathizing with Trotsky's views. It is believed that his love for the daughter of a British intelligence officer in Istanbul also played a role. Desperate for money, Atabekov wrote and published two books in the West. He was also involved in dark machinations with Caucasian emigrants, whom he promised to smuggle the family treasures hidden by them from the Soviet Union.

It was reported that Atabekov disappeared in the Pyrenees on the border with Spain. In fact, he was liquidated in Paris, lured to a safe house, where he was supposed to agree on the secret export of diamonds, pearls and precious metals belonging to a wealthy Armenian family. The Armenian he met in Antwerp was a decoy. It was he who lured Agabekov to a safe house, playing on his national feelings. There, at the apartment, a militant, a former officer of the Turkish army, and a young illegal immigrant Korotkov, who in the 40s became the head of illegal intelligence of the USSR Ministry of State Security, were already waiting for him. The Turk killed Agabekov with a knife, after which his body was stuffed into a suitcase, which was thrown into the river. The body was never found.

Turk and Korotkov carried out another terrorist operation in 1938. Eil Taubman, a young agent with the code name "Junets", a native of Lithuania, managed to gain the confidence of Rudolf Klement, who headed the Trotskyist organization in Europe and was the secretary of the so-called Fourth International. For a year and a half, Taubman worked as Clement's assistant. One evening, Taubman invited Clement to have dinner with his friends and brought him to an apartment on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, where the Turk and Korotkov were already. The Turk stabbed Clement, again the body was put in a suitcase, then thrown into the Seine. The body was found and identified by the French police, but by this time Taubman, Korotkov and the Turks were already far from Paris.

In Moscow, they were waiting for awards, and I had to take care of their future work. The Turk became the "owner" of a safe house in Moscow. Taubman changed his surname to "Semyonov" and was sent to study at the Institute of Chemical Engineering. He later moved to serve in the state security agencies.

The next episode is connected with the fate of one of the defectors in the 30s, Krivitsky. The military intelligence officer Krivitsky, who fled in 1937 and showed up in America in 1939, published a book called I Was Stalin's Agent. In February 1941, he was found dead in a Washington hotel. It was assumed that he was killed by the NKVD, although it was officially reported that it was suicide. True, there was an orientation about the search for Krivitsky, but this was the usual practice in all cases of defectors.

In the Intelligence Agency of the Red Army and the NKVD, of course, they did not regret his death, but, as far as I know, it was not the work of our hands. We believed that he shot himself as a result of a nervous breakdown, unable to cope with depression.

YEARS OF REPRESSION

When a defector or one of the political figures dies, they immediately begin to put forward a variety of versions of the person's departure from life. The most natural cause of death or the most logical motive for murder often remains buried under

layers of lies due to omissions and mutual settling of accounts.

A classic example in this respect is the death of Kirov, the Leningrad party leader who was killed in 1934.

Kirov was killed by Nikolaev. Nikolaev's wife, Milda Draule, worked as a waitress at the Kirov secretariat in Smolny. Naturally, the guards let Nikolaev into the Smolny on a party card. By the way, with a party card one could enter any party authority, except for the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. In Smolny, as in other regional committees, there was no system of special passes for party members, and Nikolaev only needed to present his party card in order to get to where outsiders were not allowed to enter.

From his wife, who in 1933-1935 worked in the NKVD in the secret political department dealing with issues of ideology and culture (her group, in particular, oversaw the Bolshoi Theater and the Leningrad Opera and Ballet Theater, later the S.M. Kirov Theater), I learned that Sergei Mironovich was very fond of women, and he had many mistresses both at the Bolshoi Theater and in Leningrad. (After the assassination of Kirov, the NKVD department clarified in detail the intimate relations of Sergei Mironovich with the actresses.) Milda Draule served at some Kirov parties. This attractive young woman was also one of his "girlfriends". Her husband Nikolaev was distinguished by a quarrelsome character, entered into disputes with his superiors and, as a result, was expelled from the party. Through the failure of his wife, he turned to Kirov for help, and he contributed to his restoration in the party and getting a job in the district committee. Milda was about to file for divorce, and the jealous husband killed the "rival". This murder was used to the maximum by Stalin to eliminate his opponents and unleash a campaign of terror. The so-called Trotskyist conspiracy, of which Kirov allegedly fell victim, was from the very beginning fabricated by Stalin himself. Stalin, followed by Khrushchev and Gorbachev, out of their own interests and wishing to divert attention from the obvious failures of the country's leadership, tried to maintain Kirov's reputation as a knight without fear or reproach. The Communist Party, which demanded impeccable behavior from its members in private life, could not announce publicly that one of its pillars, the head of the Leningrad party organization, had in fact become entangled in relationships with married women.

The official versions of the murder published in the press are fiction from start to finish. The Stalinist version was that Nikolaev was assisted by the leaders of the Leningrad NKVD, Medved and Zaporozhets, on the orders of Trotsky and Zinoviev. For Stalin, Kirov's death created a convenient myth of a conspiracy that allowed him to unleash reprisals on his enemies and potential rivals. Khrushchev's version is as follows: Nikolaev killed Kirov with the help of Medved and Zaporozhets on Stalin's orders. But documents show that Zaporozhets, considered a key figure among the conspirators and allegedly connected with Nikolaev through the NKVD, broke his leg at the time and was undergoing treatment in the Crimea. The question arises: could one of the leaders who prepared the conspiracy be absent for so long during the most decisive period of the tragic events?

Khrushchev, emphasizing the fact that many party leaders begged Kirov to put forward his candidacy for the post of General Secretary at the 17th Party Congress, and accused Stalin of having decided to liquidate Kirov after learning about the existing opposition. For Khrushchev, this version made it possible to present yet another accusation in a long list of Stalin's crimes. Documents and evidence confirming the involvement of Stalin or the NKVD apparatus in the murder of Kirov do not exist. Kirov was not an alternative to Stalin. He was one of the inflexible Stalinists who played an active role in the fight against the party opposition, merciless towards the oppositionists and in this respect did not differ from other associates of Stalin.

Khrushchev's version was later approved and adopted by Gorbachev as part of the anti-Stalinist campaign. Hiding the true facts, the leaders tried to save the reputation of the Communist Party, looking for figures popular in the party who allegedly opposed the leader. A myth was created about a healthy core in the Central Committee, headed by Kirov, as opposed to Stalin and his like-minded people.

The entire Nikolaev family, Milda Draule and her mother, were shot two or three months after the assassination attempt. Milda and her family, innocent victims of arbitrariness, were not rehabilitated until December 30, 1990, when their case surfaced in the pages of the Soviet press.

The highest ranks of the NKVD, especially those who were aware of Kirov's personal life, knew that the reason for his murder was the jealousy of a deceived husband. But none of them even dared to talk about it, since the version of a conspiracy against the party was put forward by Stalin himself and it was extremely dangerous to dispute it.

Before the assassination of Kirov, Stalin could often be found on the Arbat, accompanied by Vlasik, the head of personal security, and two bodyguards. He often visited the poet Demyan Bedny, sometimes visited his acquaintances who lived in communal apartments. Employees of the NKVD and veterans who had the "Honorary Chekist" badge, which depicts a shield and a sword, and a certificate for it, could freely pass to the Lubyanka; they had the right of passage everywhere except prisons. The whole system was immediately changed: the assassination of Kirov was a pretext for tightening control, which never weakened again.

Speculation about Kirov's death continued into the 1960s. I remember anonymous letters claiming that the real killer managed to get away. Dmitry Yefimov, Lithuanian Minister of State Security in the 1940s, told me after the war that he was ordered to look for the murderer of Kirov, who was allegedly hiding in a small Lithuanian town. His employees managed to find the author of the anonymous letter, which served as a signal for the search. They turned out to be an alcoholic. However, this anonymous signal was investigated under the direct supervision of the Party Control Committee under the Central Committee of the CPSU.

The conclusion of the Party Control Commission on the circumstances of Kirov's death was never published. Only after in July 1990 the well-known repression commission was dissolved, the prosecutor's office sent a supervisory protest to the Supreme Court of the USSR on the issue of posthumous rehabilitation of members of the Nikolaev family. The case was closed only on December 30, 1990, when all members of the Nikolaev family were officially rehabilitated by the Supreme Court of the USSR. The court ruling noted that there was no conspiracy to assassinate Kirov, and all of Nikolaev's "accomplices" were simply Kirov's acquaintances or witnesses to his excesses.

But even then, under this system of the so-called rule of law, neither Medved nor Zaporozhets were rehabilitated and they were not cleared of treason charges, including plotting to assassinate Kirov and collaborating with German and Latvian intelligence. What is the reason? It is that the prosecutor's office was simply afraid to raise this issue, since Medved and Zaporozhets are considered guilty of repressions committed in the early period of Stalin's purges.

There has long been an opinion among party historians that Milda Draule's affair with Kirov ended in a fatal outcome due to the jealousy of her husband, Nikolaev, known for his imbalance and scandalous character. If this opinion were made public, then an unsightly picture of Kirov's personal life would be put on public display, and thus the sacred rule of the party would be violated - never to lift the veil over the private lives of members of the Politburo and not to delve into their dirty linen.

On November 4, 1990, the Pravda newspaper published new materials from the KGB and the prosecutor's office on the investigation into the Kirov case, which stated that his murder was purely personal, although the details and motives of the crime were not disclosed. "Truth" is not even

mentioned the name of Milda Draule. The publication contained an accusation against Yakovlev, who left the post of chairman of the party commission investigating Stalinist repressions, who allegedly hindered the rehabilitation of the Nikolaev family and innocent people accused of taking part in the conspiracy.

Outraged, Yakovlev replied through the same newspaper (Pravda, January 28, 1991) that he still believed in the existence of a conspiracy to assassinate Kirov and several versions of how this assassination was planned. At the same time, Yakovlev did not mention either Mild Draul or the alleged attempt to nominate Kirov to replace Stalin as General Secretary at the 17th Party Congress.

In Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy, Dmitry Volkogonov refers to rumors about Milda Draule's romance with Kirov, but dismisses them as slanderous. Materials showing the special relationship between Milda Draule and Kirov, which I learned about from my wife and General Reichman, then head of counterintelligence in Leningrad, were contained in operational reports of NKVD informers from the Leningrad ballet. Ballerinas from among the mistresses of Kirov, who considered Draule their rival and did not show sufficient restraint in their statements on this subject, were put in camps for "slander and anti-Soviet agitation."

... The name of Kirov and his memory were sacred. In the eyes of the people, Kirov was the ideal of a solid Bolshevik, a loyal Stalinist, and, of course, only enemies could kill such a person. At that time I did not doubt for a moment the need to protect the prestige of the ruling party and not to reveal the true facts concerning the assassination of Kirov. We, the Chekists, were unofficially called people who took on the role of laborers of the revolution, but all while experiencing the most conflicting feelings. In those days I sincerely believed - I continue to believe even now - that Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky and Bukharin were the true enemies of Stalin. Within the framework of the totalitarian system of which they were a part, the fight against Stalin meant opposition to the party-state system of the Soviet state. Considering them as our enemies, I could not feel any sympathy for them. That is why it seemed to me that even if the accusations leveled against them were exaggerated, they were, in essence, trifles. Being an idealist communist, I realized too late the importance of such "little things" and regret to see that I was wrong.

Consciously or unconsciously, but we have allowed ourselves to be drawn into the work of a colossal mechanism of repression, and each of us is obliged to repent for the suffering of the innocent. The scale of this repression horrifies me. Giving today a historical assessment of that time, the time of mass repressions - and they affected the army, the peasantry and employees - I think they can be likened to the massacres carried out during the reign of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. No wonder Stalin is called Ivan the Terrible of the 20th century. It is tragic that our country has such cruel traditions.

Stalin manipulated the Kirov affair in his own interests, and the "plot" against Kirov was artfully fanned by him. He fabricated a "grand conspiracy" not only against Kirov, but also against himself. He skillfully used the murder of Kirov to remove those whom he suspected as his potential rivals or disloyal opponents, which he simply could not bear. First, Nikolaev's acquaintances were among the "conspirators", then the Draule family, after which it was the turn of Zinoviev and Kamenev, who were initially accused of moral responsibility for this murder, and then of his direct organization. Colleagues and acquaintances of Nikolaev were ranked among the Zinoviev opposition. Then Stalin decided to get rid of Yagoda and those officials who knew the truth. They, too, were drawn to the conspiracy and were destroyed. Later, Yagoda was made the main organizer of Kirov's assassination, and, as Reikhman told me, Stalin, who was afraid of revealing the personal motives of Nikolaev's "act of terror," even ordered that Kirov's widow be kept secretly under surveillance until her death.

In such circumstances, telling the truth about Kirov was unthinkable. No one in the upper echelons of power could prevent Stalin from using this assassination for his own purposes.

Subsequently, the Kirov case was hushed up for the sake of political considerations or used to divert public attention from the deteriorating economic and political situation. Each new investigation, subject to the requirements of the political situation, only spawned lies, making it even more difficult for future generations to reconstruct the actual events.

I am convinced that the murder of Kirov was an act of personal revenge, but to make this fact public is meant to harm the party, which was an instrument of power and an example of high morality for the Soviet people. To this day, the truth continues to be hidden, and Kirov remains a symbol of holiness for adherents of the old regime.

In 1938, the atmosphere was literally permeated with fear, something ominous was felt in it. Shpigelglas, deputy head of the NKVD's out-of-band intelligence, became more and more gloomy every day. He gave up the habit of spending Sundays with me and other work friends. In September, the secretary of Yezhov, then head of the NKVD, shot himself in a boat while riding on the Moscow River. This came as a complete surprise to us. Soon a perplexing order appeared, stating: arrest warrants without the signature of Beria, Yezhov's first deputy, are invalid. It was rumored that Beria affectionately called Yezhov "my dear Hedgehog" and used to pat him on the back, but his friendly behavior was purely ostentatious. At the Lubyanka, people seemed reserved and avoided any conversation. A special inspection commission from the Central Committee worked in the NKVD.

I clearly remember the events that soon followed. November came, the eve of the October celebrations. And at 4 o'clock in the morning I was awakened by a persistent telephone call: Kozlov, the head of the secretariat of the Foreign Department, called. The voice sounded official, but there was an unusual excitement in it.

"Pavel Anatolyevich," I heard, "the first deputy head of the State Security Department, Comrade Merkulov, is urgently calling you to his place. The car is already waiting for you. Come as soon as possible. Spiegelglas and Passov have just been arrested."

The wife was extremely worried. I decided it was my turn.

Kozlov himself met me at the Lubyanka and took me to Merkulov's office. Tog greeted me in his usual polite, calm manner and suggested that I go to Lavrenty Pavlovich. My nerves were strained to the limit. I imagined being interrogated about my connections with Spiegelglass. But, amazingly enough, Beria did not inflict any interrogation on me. In a very official tone, he announced that Passov and Shpigelglas had been arrested for deceiving the party, and that I should immediately take up the duties of the head of the Foreign, that is, the overseas intelligence department. I will have to report directly to him on all the most urgent matters. To this I replied that Passov's office was sealed and I could not enter it.

Remove the seals immediately, and for the future remember: do not fool my head like this nonsense. You are not a schoolboy to ask childish questions.

Ten minutes later I was sorting through the documents in Passov's safe. Some were just amazing. For example, a certificate for Heifetz, then a resident in Italy. It talked about his connections with elements sympathetic to the ideological deviations in the Comintern, where he worked at one time. The suspicious nature of his contacts with former graduates of the Polytechnic Institute in Jena (Germany) in 1926 was also pointed out. I still remember Yezhov's resolution on the certificate: "Recall to Moscow. Arrest immediately."

The next document is a submission to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Presidium of the Supreme Council on awarding me, Pavel Anatolyevich Sudoplatov, with the Order of the Red Banner for fulfilling an important government assignment abroad in May 1938, signed by Yezhov. There was also an unsigned order on my appointment as an assistant to the head of the Foreign Department. I took these documents to Merkulov. Smiling, he, to my considerable surprise, tore them right in front of my eyes and threw them into the wastebasket.

papers to be destroyed. I was silent, but there was a feeling of resentment in my soul - after all, I was presented with a reward for the fact that I really, risking my life, completed a dangerous task. At that moment, I did not understand how lucky I was: if the order on my appointment had been signed, then, according to the Decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, I would automatically be subject to arrest as a leading operative worker of the NKVD apparatus, to whom political distrust was expressed.

Later, in the office where I worked, the phone rang. It was Kiselyov, Malenkov's assistant in the Central Committee. He indignantly began to reprimand me for the delay in the transfer of funds from special funds intended to finance the secret operations of the Comintern in Western Europe. He was even more enraged by the fact that at the meeting of the Spanish Commission in the Central Committee there was no representative from the NKVD. I tried to explain to him that I do not know about any funds and do not know who exactly is involved in their transfer. "And at the meeting in the Central Committee," I said, "no one from the NKVD was present because Passov and his deputy had just been arrested as enemies of the people." To this I added that I had taken up my duties only two hours before. Kiselev hung up the phone.

During my three weeks as acting head of the department, I was able to learn the structure and organization of intelligence operations abroad. Within the framework of the NKVD, there were two divisions engaged in intelligence abroad. This is the Foreign Department, which was first led by Trilisser, then by Artuzov, Slutsky and Passov. The task of the department is to collect intelligence for the Center obtained both through legal (through our employees who had diplomatic cover or worked in trade missions abroad) and through illegal channels. Of particular importance was information about the activities of governments and private corporations that secretly financed the subversive activities of Russian emigrants and White Guard officers in European countries and in China, directed against the Soviet Union. The foreign department was divided into departments according to the geographical principle, and also included divisions engaged in the collection of scientific, technical and economic intelligence. These departments summarized the materials coming from our residencies abroad, both legal and illegal. The priority of illegal channels was quite natural, since at that time there were not so many Soviet diplomatic and trade missions abroad. This is why illegal channels for obtaining the intelligence we were interested in were so important.

At the same time, there was another intelligence service - the Special Group under the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, directly subordinate to him and deeply conspiratorial. Its task was to create a reserve network of illegal immigrants to conduct sabotage operations behind enemy lines in Western Europe, the Middle East, China and the United States in case of war. Given the nature of the work, the Special Group did not have its own employees in diplomatic and trade missions abroad. Its apparatus consisted of twenty operatives who were responsible for coordinating the activities of overseas agents. All other employees worked abroad as illegal immigrants. At the time I am talking about, the number of such illegal immigrants was about sixty people. It soon became clear to me that the leadership of the NKVD could, at its choice, use the forces and means of the Foreign Department and the Special Group to carry out especially important operations, including sabotage and liquidation of the opponents of the USSR abroad.

The special group was sometimes called the "Yasha Group" because for more than ten years it was headed by Yakov Serebryansky. It was his people who organized in 1930 the abduction of the head of the White Guard ROVS in Paris, General Kutepov. Before the revolution, Serebryansky was a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. He took a personal part in the liquidation of the Okhrana officials who organized the Jewish pogroms in Mogilev (Belarus). The Yasha Group created a powerful network of agents in France, Germany, Palestine, the USA and Scandinavia in the 1920s and 1930s. They recruited agents from the Comintern underground, those who did not participate in propaganda activities and whose membership in the national communist parties

was kept secret. In November 1938, Serebryansky, among the leaders of the NKVD, was under arrest - he was sentenced to death, but not shot. In 1941, after the war began, he was released and, on my initiative, became the head of the department that recruited agents for deep settling in Western Europe and the USA.

In 1946, Abakumov was appointed Minister of State Security, and Serebryansky had to resign, since in 1938 it was Abakumov who conducted his case and, using brutal torture, knocked out false testimony. Naturally, Serebryansky could not stay at work with the arrival of a new minister. He retired with the rank of colonel and received a pension. After Stalin's death, he was returned to the service and appointed one of my deputies in connection with a plan to expand reconnaissance and sabotage operations. This was under Beria, in April 1953, and in October of the same year he was arrested with his wife for the second time - now he was accused of participating in the so-called Beria plot to kill members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Party. He died in prison in 1956 during another interrogation and was posthumously rehabilitated in 1971.

m under Andropov, who learned about the fate of Serebryansky during the preparation of the first textbook on the history of Soviet intelligence, which began to be written at his direction.

Only in 1963 did I learn what was really behind the cardinal reshuffles and purges in the ranks of the NKVD in the last months of 1938. The full truth about these events, which was never made public, was told to me by Mamulov and Ludwigov, who headed the secretariat of Beria - they were in the Vladimir prison with me. This is how the fake was launched, which opened the way for the campaign against Yezhov and the people who worked with him. Spurred on by Beria, two heads of regional NKVD departments from Yaroslavl and Kazakhstan wrote to Stalin in October 1938, slanderously claiming that Yezhov had alluded to impending arrests of members of the Soviet leadership on the eve of the October celebrations. The action to compromise Yezhov was successfully carried out. A few weeks later, Yezhov was accused of plotting to overthrow the legitimate government. The Politburo adopted a special resolution, in which the top officials of the NKVD were declared "politically unreliable." This led to mass arrests of the entire leadership of the security agencies, and I was really lucky that Yezhov's order for my promotion remained unsigned in Passov's safe.

In December 1938, Beria officially took over the reins of government in the NKVD, and Dekanozov became the new head of the Foreign Department. He had experience in the Azerbaijan GPU under Beria as a supplier. Later in Georgia, Dekanozov was the people's commissar of the food industry, where he became famous for his immoderate love of luxury. Handing over cases, I, as acting head of the department, explained to him some of the features of our undercover work in Western Europe, the USA and China. But Dekanozov, without listening to me to the end, ordered me to follow the things of the fugitive Orlov, which were sent from Barcelona to Moscow. I was supposed to deliver them to his office - he wanted to see them personally.

The next day, Beria introduced Dekanozov to the intelligence service. In an official and stern tone, Beria announced the creation of a special commission headed by Dekanozov to check all intelligence operatives. The commission was supposed to find out how traitors and adventurers who deceive the Central Committee of the Party are exposed. Beria announced the new appointments of Garanin, Fitin, Leonenko and Lyagin. He also stressed that all remaining employees will be carefully checked. New leaders came to intelligence through party recruitment. The Central Committee flooded the ranks of the NKVD with party activists and graduates of the Frunze Military Academy. As for me, I was demoted to Deputy Head of the Spanish Section. Other veterans of the intelligence service were similarly treated, who were also demoted to assistant section chiefs.

Beria, in a conversation with every employee who was present at the meeting, tried to

find out if he is a double agent, and said that everyone is now under suspicion. My wife was one of four female intelligence officers. Having brazenly measured her with his eyes, Beria asked who she was: a German or a Ukrainian. "Jewish" to Beria's surprise, she replied. From that day on, my wife constantly warned me to beware of Beria. Assuming our apartment might be bugged, she came up with a code name for him so that we wouldn't mention his name in our conversations at home. She called him Prince Shadiman after the hero of Antonovskaya's novel "The Great Mouravi", who fell in the struggle for power between the Georgian feudal lords. My wife's foresight regarding the fate of Beria and her constant advice to stay away from him and his entourage turned out to be prophetic.

After the introduction of the new leadership, Beria was followed by a party meeting - this was the next stage of the campaign. On it, my colleague, whom I knew from Kharkov, Gukasov, an Armenian, unexpectedly suggested that the party bureau consider my suspicious connections. He said that Balitsky, an enemy of the people, had transferred me to Moscow. He also accused me of maintaining friendly relations with other recently exposed enemies of the people - Spiegelglas, Raisa Sobol and my husband, Revzin, Yarikov, our deputy resident in China, known for his sarcastic witticisms about the fulfillment of five-year plans (I recall one of them: "In the fourth final blat is decisive").

The Party Bureau set up a commission on my case. One of my close acquaintances, Gesselberg, the head of the photographic laboratory (he was responsible for the reliability of photojournalists who filmed Stalin), asked stupid questions and claimed that I was defending myself as "a typical Trotskyist double-dealer."

I do not hold a grudge against either Gukasov or Hesselberg.

... Three years later, Gukasov, being the Soviet consul in Paris, woke up when the Gestapo stormed the building where he was. Our cipher clerk Marina Sirotkina started burning the code books, and when one of the Gestapo men ripped Stalin's portrait from the wall, Gukasov used this as an excuse to start a fight. He was severely beaten, but during this time all the ciphers were destroyed. Gukasov was deported by the Germans to Turkey to be exchanged for employees of the German diplomatic mission in Moscow. Later, Gukasov was assigned to lead the department for the development of expatriates and emigrants. He died in Moscow in 1956.

...Hesselberg prepared a draft decision of the party bureau under the dictation of Dekanozov. It proposed that I be expelled from the ranks of the Communist Party for my association with the enemies of the people and for not exposing Spiegelglas. It is characteristic that in this document Slutsky, although he died in February of the year and was buried with all due honors, also appeared as an enemy of the people.

The Party Bureau adopted this decision with one abstention. Fitin, recently appointed to the post of Deputy Head of the Foreign Department, abstained because, according to him, I was completely unknown to him. His honesty and decency, quite unusual in the circumstances, did not hurt his career. In 1939, he became head of the Foreign Department of Overseas Intelligence and died of natural causes in 1971.

In December 1938, the Party Bureau decided to expel me from the Party. This decision was to be approved by the general party meeting of the intelligence service, scheduled for January 1939, but for now I came to work and sat at my desk in my office, doing nothing. New employees did not dare to communicate with me, fearing to compromise themselves. I remember that the head of the department, Garanin, talking with his deputy in my presence, switched to a whisper, fearing that I might overhear. In order to do something, I decided to replenish my knowledge and began to study the files from the archive, waiting for my fate to be decided.

I felt depressed. My wife was also very worried, realizing that a serious threat hung over us. We were sure that we already have compromising evidence,

fabricated and knocked out during the investigation from our friends. But I still hoped that, since I was personally known to the leadership of the NKVD as a dedicated worker, my arrest would not be sanctioned. In those years, I still lived with the illusion that injustice could be done to a party member only because of incompetence or a simple mistake, especially if the decision of his fate depended on a person standing high enough in the party hierarchy and also enjoying full Stalin's support.

Knowing that a terrible injustice was being committed against me, I thought of turning to the Party Control Commission of the Central Committee with a request to look into my case, but my wife believed that it was necessary to prepare a letter addressed to Stalin, which she herself would send, and if we were both arrested, send my mother.

When our friends were arrested, we all thought there had been a mistake. But with the advent of Dekanozov, for the first time, they realized that these were not mistakes. No, that was a deliberate policy. Incompetent people were appointed to leadership positions, who could be given any orders. For the first time, we feared for our lives, threatened to be destroyed by our own system. It was then that I began to reflect on the nature of the system, which sacrifices people who serve it faithfully.

Another of my friends, Petr Zubov, also fell victim and fell into the same meat grinder. In 1937 he was appointed resident in Prague. For the first time in his intelligence service, he worked under diplomatic cover. Zubov met with President Eduard Benes and, on Stalin's instructions, handed over ten thousand dollars to the latter, since Benes could not use his money to organize the departure of loved ones and people he needed from Czechoslovakia to Great Britain. A receipt for the money was given to Zubov by the secretary of the Czechoslovak president. Benes himself fled to England in 1938. Zubov did an excellent job. The British and French authorities did not have the slightest idea of our connections with persons who had left Czechoslovakia. Six months after Benes left Prague, Zubov was recalled to Moscow and arrested on Stalin's personal order.

The reason for the arrest was that Beneš—through Zubov—offered to Stalin that the Soviet Union should subsidize a 1938 coup against the Stojadinović government in Yugoslavia in order to establish a military regime there and thus relieve pressure on Czechoslovakia. Beneš asked for two hundred thousand dollars in cash for the Serbian officers who were to stage the coup. Having received this amount from the Center, Zubov went to Belgrade to get acquainted with the situation on the spot. When he became convinced that the officers in question were just a bunch of unreliable adventurers and no successful plot could be expected, he was shocked and refused to pay them an advance. Returning to Prague with the money, he reported to the Center about the situation. Stalin was furious: Zubov dared to disobey the order. On the Zubov telegram explaining his actions, Stalin wrote in his own hand: "Arrest immediately." (I saw this telegram in 1941 when I was shown the Zubov case.)

The meeting with Zubov in the corridor of the 7th floor on the Lubyanka on the very first day of his return from Czechoslovakia made me happy: from day to day the party bureau was supposed to raise the question of my expulsion from the party at the meeting, and I hoped for his support, as he used great authority in the Foreign Department. We agreed to see him the next day, but he did not come. I thought he was just avoiding contact with me, but Emma met his wife on the street and found out about his arrest. I had no idea what exactly he was accused of: those were the times when you could only look closely at what was happening and try not to lose hope.

And then the unexpected happened. The meeting scheduled for January, which was supposed to approve my exclusion from the ranks of the party, was postponed. Yezhov, who had been dismissed from his duties as People's Commissar back in December of last year, was soon arrested. business

Yezhov, as I learned later, Beria and one of his deputies, Bogdan Kobulov, were personally involved. Many years later Kobulov told me that Yezhov had been arrested in Malenkov's office at the Central Committee. When they led him to be shot, he sang the Internationale.

I still hold Yezhov responsible for many serious crimes - moreover, he was also a professionally incompetent leader. I am sure that Stalin's crimes took on such an insane scale due to the fact, in particular, that Yezhov turned out to be completely unsuitable for intelligence and counterintelligence work.

To understand the nature of Yezhovshchina, it is necessary to take into account the political traditions characteristic of our country. All political campaigns under a dictatorship invariably take on insane proportions, and Stalin is guilty not only of the crimes committed on his orders, but also of allowing his subordinates on his behalf to destroy those who turned out to be objectionable to the local party authorities at the district and regional levels. The leaders of the party and the NKVD got the opportunity to resolve even the most ordinary disputes that arose almost every day, by liquidating their

opponents.

Of course, in those days I did not yet know everything, but in order to have reason to fear for my life, my knowledge was enough. Based on the logic of events, I expected to be arrested at the end of January, or at the very least, early February 1939. Every day I came to work and did nothing - I sat and waited for my arrest. On one of the March days I was summoned to Beria's office, and unexpectedly for myself I heard a reproach that I had been idle for the last two months. "I'm following orders from the section chief," I said. Beria did not consider it necessary to comment on my words in any way and ordered to accompany him to an important, in his words, meeting. I assumed that we were talking about a meeting with one of the agents, whom he personally supervised, at a safe house. In September 1938 I accompanied him twice to similar events. Meanwhile, the car took us to the Kremlin, where we entered through the Spassky Gate. The driver stopped the car at a dead end near Ivanovskaya Square. Then I suddenly realized that Stalin would receive me.

LIQUIDATION OF TROTSKY

The entrance to the Kremlin building, where Stalin worked, was familiar to me from past meetings with him. We climbed the stairs to the second floor and walked along a long deserted corridor covered with red carpet, past cabinets with high doors, such as are found in museums. Beria and I were let through by the same security officer who was also on duty when Yezhov brought me here. Now he was no longer greeting Yezhov, but Beria: "I wish you good health, Comrade Beria!"

Beria opened the door, and we entered a reception room of such enormous size that the three desks standing there looked quite tiny. There was a cable in the reception room: two in tunics of the same cut as Stalin's, and one in military uniform. Beria was greeted by a short, seemingly stocky man in a green tunic, whose voice sounded low and impassive. (Later I learned that it was Poskrebyshev, the head of Stalin's secretariat.) It seemed to me that in this room the rule was the complete absence of external manifestations of any kind of emotion. Indeed, such was the unwritten and once for all approved by Stalin and Molotov order in this

building.

Poskrebyshev led us into Stalin's office and then silently closed the door behind us.

At that moment, I experienced the same feelings as in previous meetings with Stalin: excitement, mixed with intense expectation, and delight engulfing you all. It seemed to me that the beating of my heart could be heard by those around me.

At our appearance, Stalin rose from the table. Standing in the middle of the office, we shook hands, and he motioned for us to sit down at a long table covered with green cloth. The desktop of Stalin himself was very close in the corner of the office.

Out of the corner of my eye, I managed to notice that all the folders on his desk were laid out in perfect order, above the desk - a portrait of Lenin, and on the other wall - Marx and Engels. Everything in the office looked the same as the last time I was here. But Stalin himself seemed different: attentive, calm and focused. Listening to the interlocutor, he seemed to consider every word said to him, which seemed to have a special meaning for him. And it simply could not occur to the interlocutor that this person could be insincere.

Was it really so? Not sure. But Stalin really listened to Beria with great attention.

"Comrade Stalin," he turned to him, "at the direction of the party, we exposed the former leadership of the NKVD overseas intelligence service and thwarted their perfidious attempt to deceive the government. We are making a proposal to appoint Comrade Sudoplatov as deputy chief of intelligence of the NKVD in order to help the young party cadres mobilized to work in the organs to cope with the tasks of the government.

Stalin frowned. He still held his pipe in his hand without lighting it. Then he struck a match (a gesture familiar to anyone who has watched at least one newsreel magazine) and pulled the ashtray towards him. He did not say a word about my appointment, but asked Beria to briefly describe the main directions of intelligence operations abroad. While Beria was speaking, Stalin got up from the table and began to pace the office, he moved slowly and completely inaudibly in his

soft Caucasian boots.

Although Stalin walked without stopping, it seemed to me that he did not relax his attention, on the contrary, he became more concentrated. His remarks were distinguished by a certain harshness, which he did not think to hide. Such harshness towards the people invited to the reception was, perhaps, the most typical feature in his behavior, constituting an integral part of Stalin's personality - the same as the pockmarks on his face, which gave him a severe view.

According to Beria, foreign intelligence in modern conditions must change the main directions of its work. Its main task should not be the fight against emigration, but the preparation of residencies for war in Europe and the Far East. A much greater role, he believed, will be played by our agents of influence, that is, people from the business government circles of the West and Japan, who have access to the leadership of these countries and can be used to achieve our goals in foreign policy. Such people should be looked for among the leaders of the liberal movement, who are tolerant of the communists. Meanwhile, according to Beria, the left movement was in a state of serious confusion due to the attempts of the Trotskyists to subjugate it. In this way, Trotsky and his supporters posed a serious challenge to the Soviet Union. They sought to deprive the USSR of its position as the leader of the world communist movement. Beria offered to strike a decisive blow at the center of the Trotskyist movement abroad and put me in charge of carrying out these operations. In conclusion, he said that it was precisely for this purpose that my candidacy was put forward for the post of deputy head of the Foreign Department, which was then headed by Dekanozov. My task was to use all the possibilities of the NKVD to eliminate Trotsky.

There was a pause. Stalin continued the conversation.

- There are no important political figures in the Trotskyist movement, except for himself Trotsky. If Trotsky is done away with, the threat to the Comintern will be eliminated.

He again took his place opposite us and began to slowly express dissatisfaction with the way intelligence operations were being conducted. In his opinion, they lacked proper activity. He stressed that the elimination of Trotsky in 1937 was entrusted to Spiegelglas, but he failed this important government task.

Then Stalin became stern and, minting words, as if giving an order, he said:

Trotsky must be eliminated within a year before the inevitable war breaks out. Without the elimination of Trotsky, as the Spanish experience shows, we cannot be

we are sure, in the event of an attack by the imperialists on the Soviet Union, in the support of our allies in the international communist movement. It will be very difficult for them to fulfill their international duty to destabilize the rear of the enemy, to launch a guerrilla war.

"We have no historical experience of building a powerful industrial and military power at the same time as strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat," Stalin continued, and after assessing the international situation and the upcoming war in Europe, he turned to the question that directly concerned me. I was to lead a group of militants to carry out an operation to eliminate Trotsky, who was at that time in exile in Mexico. Stalin clearly preferred streamlined words like "action" (instead of "liquidation"), while noting that if the action was successful, "the party will never forget those who participated in it, and will take care not only of themselves, but of all members their families."

When I tried to object that I was not quite suitable for this assignment in Mexico, since I did not speak Spanish at all, Stalin did not react in any way.

I asked for permission to involve veterans of sabotage operations in civil war in Spain.

"It is your duty and the duty of the party to find and select suitable and reliable people to carry out the task of the party. You will be provided with any help and support. Report directly to Comrade Beria and no one else, but remember: the entire responsibility for carrying out this action lies with you. You are personally obliged to carry out all the preparatory work and personally send a special team from Europe to Mexico. The Central Committee authorizes the submission of all reports on the operation exclusively in handwritten

form.

The audience ended, we said goodbye and left the office. After meeting with Stalin, I was immediately appointed deputy head of intelligence. I was assigned an office on the seventh floor of the main building of the Lubyanka, number 755, which had once been occupied by Shpigelglas.

My wife was concerned about my quick promotion in 1938. She preferred that I remain in an inconspicuous position, and she was right, since the persecution of me began precisely because of this, although the appointment was purely temporary. I was not an enemy of the people, but an enemy of envious colleagues - such was the common motive for persecution during the years of the purges.

The new appointment left no time for long reflections on the campaign against me, which nearly cost me my life. The dizzying speed with which events unfolded carried me away. The party meeting never considered my personal file. Two days after the conversation in the Kremlin, I was informed that the party bureau had reconsidered its decision to expel me from the party and instead issued a reprimand with registration on the registration card for losing vigilance and not exposing the hostile actions of the former leadership of the Foreign Department

The next day, as soon as I arrived at my new office, I got a call from home. Eitingon, recently returned from France.

- Pavlusha, I've been in Moscow for ten days, doing nothing. The operations department set up constant surveillance of me. I'm sure my phone is being tapped. You know how I worked. Please report to your superiors: if they want to arrest me, let them do it right away, and not arrange childish games.

I replied to Eitingon that it was my first day in a leadership position and I was not aware of any plans for his arrest. I immediately invited him to come to me, then called Merkulov and reported on the conversation. He laughed and said:

"Those idiots are putting Eitingon and his group under surveillance, not understand that they are dealing with professionals.

Ten minutes later, Beria called me over a direct wire and suggested: since

Eitingon is a suitable candidate for the case known to me, by the end of the day he is waiting for us both with proposals.

When Eitingon appeared, I told him about the plan for the operation in Mexico. He played a leading role in it. He agreed without the slightest hesitation. Eitingon was the ideal figure to lead the special illegal residency in the US and Mexico. It was possible to get close to Trotsky only through our agents, who settled in Mexico after the end of the war in Spain. Nobody knew these people better than him. Working together, we became close friends. The order to liquidate Trotsky did not surprise him or me: for more than ten years the OGPU-NKVD had waged a real war against Trotsky and his organization.

Forced to leave the Soviet Union in 1929, Trotsky went through several countries (Turkey, Norway and France) before settling in Mexico in 1937. Even before his expulsion, he essentially lost to Stalin in the struggle for power and, while in exile, made considerable efforts to split and then lead the world communist movement, causing unrest in the ranks of the communists, weakening our position in Western Europe and especially in Germany in the early 1930s.

At the suggestion of Eitingon, the operation against Trotsky was called "Duck". In this code name, the word "duck" was naturally used in the sense of "disinformation": when they say that "ducks have flown", they mean the publication of false information in the press.

Leonid knew our intelligence network in the United States and Western Europe, so he was able to realistically imagine which of the agents we could rely on with confidence. Unfortunately, Maria de Las Heras, our best agent "Patria", whom we managed to introduce into Trotsky's secretariat during his stay in Norway and who was with him in Mexico, had to be immediately recalled. Spiegelglas planned to use her in 1937-1938, but the flight of Orlov, who knew her well, ruined this plan. We couldn't risk it and we were right. It is possible that the forced temporary abandonment of the military operation in Mexico led to the tragic fate of Spiegelglas. He knew too much and ceased to be needed.

The fate of Maria de Las Heras turned out to be legendary. During the Great Patriotic War, she was parachuted into the rear of the Germans, where she fought in the partisan detachment of Hero of the Soviet Union Medvedev. After the war, she actively worked in the KGB spy network in Latin America, performing the duties of a radio operator. In total, Maria de Las Heras was an illegal immigrant for more than two decades. She returned to the USSR only in the 70s with the rank of colonel, and died in 1988.

Two months after his flight to America, Orlov wrote an anonymous letter to Trotsky, warning that plans were being developed to assassinate him and this action would be carried out by people from his entourage who had come from Spain. At that time we did not know about Orlov's letter with this warning, but we fully assumed that Orlov might take such an action.

My original plan was to use the agents recruited by Eitingon among the Trotskyists in Western Europe and especially in Spain. Eitingon, for example, personally recruited the leaders of the Spanish Trotskyists, the Ruan brothers. He was in touch with former anarchists who sympathized with Trotsky, the ministers of the republican government of Spain, Gaodosio Olivero and Frederico Amundseni. However, Eitingon insisted on using those agents in Western Europe

Latin America and the USA, which have never participated in any operations against Trotsky and his supporters. In accordance with his plan, it was necessary to create two independent groups. The first group "Horse" under the leadership of David Alfaro Siqueiros, a Mexican artist personally known to Stalin, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War. He moved to Mexico and became one of the organizers of the Mexican Communist Party. The second is the so-called "Mother" group, led by Caridad Mercader. Among her wealthy ancestors was the vice-governor of Cuba, and her great-grandfather was the Spanish ambassador.

in Russia. Caridad left her husband, a Spanish railroad magnate, for anarchists and fled to Paris with four children in the early 1930s. She had to earn a living by knitting. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, she returned to Barcelona, joined the anarchists and was badly wounded in the stomach during an air raid. The eldest son Caridad died (he threw himself under a tank, tied with grenades), and the middle one, Ramon, fought in a partisan detachment. The youngest son Luis arrived in Moscow in 1939, along with other children of the Spanish Republicans who fled from Franco, the daughter remained in Paris. Since Ramon was completely unknown among the Trotskyists, Eitingon, who was then still in Spain, decided to send him from Barcelona to Paris in the summer of 1938 under the guise of a young businessman, adventurer and playboy who from time to time would financially support political extremists from -for his hostile attitude towards any

the authorities.

By 1938, Ramon and his mother Caridad, both living in Paris, had committed themselves to cooperating with Soviet intelligence. In September, on a tip from the Rouen brothers, Ramon met Sylvia Agelof, who was then in Paris, and the Rosmers, who were friends with the Trotsky family. Following Eitingon's instructions, he refrained from any political activity. His role was to sometimes help friends and those with whom he sympathized with money, but not to interfere in politics. He was not interested in the affairs of these people and rejected offers to join their movement.

We also had another important agent under the code name "Harry" - the Englishman Morrison, unknown to either Orlov or Spiegelglas. "Harry" worked for Serebryansky's Special Group and played a key role in the theft of Trotsky's archives in Europe in December 1937. (According to my prompting, this archive was requested by Dmitry Volkogonov and used by him in his book Trotsky, 1992.) "Harry" He also had strong connections in the seventh arrondissement of the police department of Paris, which helped him to obtain for us genuine seals and letterheads of the French police and gendarmerie to forge passports and residence permits that allowed our agents to settle in France.

Eitingon believed that his agents should operate completely independently of our local stations in the US and Mexico. I agreed with him, but warned that we would not be able to relocate all the necessary people from Western Europe to America, relying only on conventional sources of funding. According to our estimates, for the redeployment and equipment of the groups, it was necessary to have at least three hundred thousand dollars. To create a reliable cover, Eitingon offered to use his personal family ties in the United States in the operation. We outlined our considerations to Beria, emphasizing that in Trotsky's entourage we have no one who would have direct access to him. We did not rule out that we would have to take his residence by storm. Frustrated by the recall of the "Patria" agent from Trotsky's entourage, agreeing to use Eitingon's personal connections, Beria unexpectedly suggested that we use Orlov's connections, for which we should contact him on his behalf. Orlov was known to Beria from Georgia, where he commanded a border detachment in 1921. Eitingon strongly objected, and not only for personal reasons: in Spain, he had a strained relationship with Orlov. He believed that Orlov, being a professional who participated in the liquidations of defectors, would certainly not believe us, no matter whose name we turn to him. Moreover, if he notices surveillance or any attempts to reach him, he can endanger all of our people. Reluctantly, Beria was forced to agree with us. As a result, the order of authority transmitted to me by Beria read: leave Orlov in the hay and not look for any connections with him.

Beria was very preoccupied with how to use his old personal connections in operational affairs. Through his wife Nina, Beria had two famous relatives of Gegechkori: one was a convinced Bolshevik, a district in Georgia was named after him, the other, who lived in exile in Paris, was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Menshevik

the government of Georgia. (Later, this was the basis for the accusation, fabricated against Beria, that he was connected with imperialist intelligence services through his relatives.) Our residency in France was literally inundated with his directives to work out the Georgian emigration, especially the Mensheviks, whose government was in exile in Paris. I remember that some Georgian princes fooled us for a long time with rumors about incredible treasures allegedly hidden in caches throughout our country.

From a conversation with us at that time, Beria, however, realized that we really needed a new agent network that would rule out the possibility of betrayal. He told us to get started without worrying about the financial side of things. After the group was formed, he wanted to add several agents known to him

personally.

Beria ordered that I go with Eitingon to Paris to assess the group sent to Mexico. In June 1939, Georg Miller, an Austrian émigré who was the head of the "passport technology" department, supplied us with (false documents. When we left Moscow, Eitingon was glad like a child that one of his sisters, a chronic grump, did not come to the station. There was a superstitious belief in their family that any business that she blessed with her presence was doomed to failure in advance. From Moscow we went to Odessa, and from there by sea to Athens, where we changed documents and on another ship sailed to Marseille.

We got to Paris by train. There I met with Ramon and Caridad Mercader and then, separately, with members of the Siqueiros group. The two groups did not communicate and were not aware of each other's existence. I found them to be quite reliable, and more importantly, they were involved in sabotage operations behind Franco's front lines. This experience must have helped them in their action against Trotsky. I suggested that Eitingon stay with Caridad and Ramon for a month and introduce them to the basics of undercover work. They had no knowledge of such basic things as source development techniques, agent recruitment, surveillance detection, or appearance alteration. This knowledge was necessary for them to avoid the traps of the counterintelligence service of a small group of Trotskyists in Mexico, but the delay almost became fatal for Eitingon.

I returned to Moscow at the end or middle of July, and in August 1939 Caridad and Ramon sailed from Le Havre for New York. Eitingon was to follow them shortly, but by then the Polish passport with which he arrived in Paris had become a dangerous document. After the German invasion of Poland, which marked the beginning of the Second World War, he was going to be drafted into the French army as a Polish refugee or interned as a suspicious foreigner. At the same time, new, more stringent restrictions on foreign travel for Poles were introduced, so that Eitingon had to go underground.

I returned to Moscow, cursing myself for the delay caused by the preparation of agents, but, unfortunately, we had no other choice. We instructed our resident in Paris, Vasilevsky (code name "Tarasov"), who worked as a general consul, to do everything possible to provide "Tom" (as Eitingon got through operational correspondence) with the appropriate documents for a trip to America. It took Vasilevsky almost a month to complete this task. While the court and the case, he placed Eitingon in a psychiatric hospital, the chief doctor of which was a Russian emigrant. On my instructions, Vasilevsky used Morrison's connections to get "Tom" a fake French residence permit. Now "Tom" has become a Syrian Jew suffering from a mental disorder. Naturally, he was unfit for military service, and the document gave him the opportunity to stay in France and could be used to obtain a foreign passport. Vasilevsky was sure that the passport was genuine (the French official received a bribe), but still the problem of obtaining an American visa remained.

Our only connection to the American consulate was through a respectable businessman from Switzerland - in fact, the ego was our illegal Steinberg. However, there is an additional difficulty here. He refused to return to Moscow, where he was recalled in 1938. In the letter, he declared his loyalty, but said that he was afraid of a purge in the NKVD. Vasilevsky sent a liaison officer, our illegal Takhchianov, to meet him in Lausanne. He was insured by another illegal immigrant, Alakhverdov. During the meeting, Steinberg was ready to shoot the contact, fearing that he was the killer. In the end, he agreed to arrange a visa for a Syrian Jew: he did not recognize Eitingon in the passport photo - he grew a mustache and changed his hairstyle. A week later, Steinberg got a visa, and our envoy returned with it to Paris.

Eitingon arrived in New York in October 1939 and set up an import/export firm in Brooklyn, which we used as our communications center. And most importantly, this firm provided a "roof" for Ramon Mercader, who settled in Mexico with a fake Canadian passport in the name of Frank Jackson. He was now able to make frequent trips to New York to meet with Eitingon, who provided him with money.

Gradually, a cover was found in Mexico for the Siqueiros group. We had two illegal radio operators, but, unfortunately, radio communication was ineffective due to the poor quality of the equipment. Eitingon developed options for infiltrating Trotsky's villa in Coyacan, a suburb of Mexico City. The owner of the villa, the Mexican painter Diego Rivera, rented it to Trotsky. The Siqueiros group planned to storm the building, while the main goal of Ramon, who had no idea of the existence of the Siqueiros group, was to use his love affair with Sylvia Agelof in order to befriend Trotsky's entourage.

Ramon looked like the current star of French cinema, Alain Deloz. Sylvia could not resist his peculiar magnetism back in Paris. She traveled with Ramon to New York, but he tried to keep her away from Aepshgon. It happened that Eipshgon watched Ramon and Sylvia in a restaurant, but was never introduced to her.

In Trotskyist circles, Ramon kept himself independent, making no attempt to win their confidence "by expressing sympathy for the common cause." He continued to play the part of a businessman who "supports Trotsky because of his eccentricity" rather than as a dedicated follower.

The Siqueiros group had a plan of the rooms of Trotsky's villa smuggled in by Maria de Las Heras before she was recalled to Moscow. She gave a description of Trotsky's bodyguards, as well as a detailed analysis of the activities of his small secretariat. This very important information was sent by me to Eitingon.

At the end of 1939, Beria proposed to strengthen the network of our illegal immigrants in Mexico. He took me to a safe house and introduced me to Grigulevich (code name "Yuzik"), who had come to Moscow after working as an illegal immigrant in Western Europe. He was known in Trotskyist circles for his political neutrality. No one suspected him of trying to infiltrate their organization. His presence in Latin America was quite natural, since Grigulevich's father owned a large pharmacy in Argentina.

Grigulevich arrived in Mexico in January 1940 and, at the direction of Eitingon, created a third, reserve, network of illegal immigrants for operations in Mexico and California. He collaborated with the Siqueiros group. Grigulevich managed to befriend one of Trotsky's bodyguards, Sheldon Hart. When Hart was on duty on May 23, 1940, Grigulevich knocked on the gate of the villa in the wee hours. Hart made an unforgivable mistake - he opened the gates, and Siqueiros' group broke into Trotsky's residence. They riddled with automatic bursts the room where Trotsky was. But since they fired through a closed door and the results of the shelling were not verified, Trotsky, who hid under the bed, remained alive.

Hart was liquidated because he knew Grigulevich and could betray us. The incident ended with the arrest of only Siqueiros, which provided good cover to continue.

the actions of Grigulsvich and Mercader, who were still unaware of each other's existence.

The assassination attempt failed due to the fact that the capture group was not professionally trained for a specific action. Eitingon, for reasons of secrecy, did not take part in this attack. He would certainly have corrected the actions of the attackers. There was no one in the Siqueiros group who had experience of searches and inspections of premises or houses. The members of his group were peasants and miners with elementary training in guerrilla warfare and sabotage.

Eitingon radioed a coded message about the failure of the operation. The message came to us with some delay, because it went through a Soviet ship, located in New York Harbor, from there the cipher message went by radio to Paris to Vasilevsky. He handed it over to Moscow, but did not attach much importance to the message, since he did not know the cipher. As a result, Beria and Stalin learned about the failed assassination attempt from a TASS report. I don't remember the exact date, obviously it was a May Sunday in 1940. I was called to Beria's dacha - his car was sent for me. There were guests at the dacha: Serov, the then People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, and Kruglov, Beria's deputy for personnel. When I entered they were having lunch.

Beria, apparently, did not want to discuss our case in their presence. He motioned me to a garden where subtropical plants grew, planted by him in the hope that they would be able to survive in the harsh climate of Moscow. His wife Nina, an agronomist by education, and son Sergey were engaged in the garden. Beria introduced me to them and walked with me to the far corner of the garden. He was furious. Looking at me point-blank, he began to ask about the composition of the group approved by me in Paris and about the plan for the destruction of Trotsky. I replied that the professional level of the Siqueiros group is low, but they are people dedicated to our cause and ready to sacrifice their lives for it. I expect a detailed radio report from Mexico in a day or two. After our conversation, we returned to the dining room, and Beria ordered me to immediately return to work and inform him as soon as I learned of further events.

Two days later I received a brief report from Eitingon from Paris and reported to Beria. Eitingon reported that he was ready, with the approval of the Center, to start implementing an alternative plan - to use Mercader, the main of our "outsider" agents, to eliminate Trotsky. To carry out this plan, it was necessary to abandon the use of Mercader as our agent in Trotsky's entourage and not introduce new ones: the arrest of an agent who tried to kill Trotsky could mean the failure of the entire agent network connected directly with Trotsky and his entourage. I felt that neither I nor Eitingon could make such a decision on their own. It could only be accepted by Beria and Stalin. The introduction of agents into Trotskyist groups abroad was one of the important priorities in the work of Soviet intelligence in the 1930-1940s. How else could one get information about what would happen in Trotskyist circles after the assassination of Trotsky?

Will the Trotskyists wield power and pose a threat to the USSR without their leader? Stalin regularly read messages from our agent, who managed to infiltrate the staff of a Trotskyist newspaper published in New York. From him we received information about the plans and aims of their movement and accordingly organized our activities in the fight against Trotskyism. Often, Stalin had the opportunity to read Trotskyist articles and documents even before they were published in the West.

Today, for the sake of political conjuncture, the activities of Trotsky and his supporters abroad in 1930-1940 are reduced to nothing more than propaganda work. But it's not. The Trotskyists were active: they organized, using the support of people associated with the Abwehr, a rebellion against the republican government in Barcelona in 1937. From Trotskyist circles to the secret services of France and Germany there were "suggestive" materials about the actions of the Communist Parties in support of the Soviet Union. Schulze-Boysen, who became

later one of the leaders of our underground group "Red Chapel". Subsequently, after his arrest, the Gestapo accused him of giving us this information, and this fact figured in the death sentence of the Nazi court in his case.

Other examples of the use of Trotskyist connections by the Abwehr to search for leaders of the Communist Party of France hiding in the underground in 1941 were reported by our resident in Paris, Vasilevsky, appointed in 1940 as an authorized representative of the executive committee of the Comintern.

I explained all this to Beria. At first he didn't react at all. I went back to my office and waited...

I didn't have to wait long. Just two hours later I was called to the third floor to Beria.

"Come with me," he said to me.

This time we went to see Stalin at a nearby dacha, half an hour's drive west of Moscow. The first part of the meeting was very short. I reported on Siqueiros' failed attempt to eliminate Trotsky, explaining that the alternative plan meant the threat of losing the anti-Trotskyist network in the United States and Latin America after Trotsky was destroyed.

Stalin asked only one question:

- To what extent is the intelligence network in the United States and Mexico, which is led by Ovakimyan, involved in the operation against Trotsky?

I replied that the Eitingon operation, which was given special powers to independently recruit and attract people without the sanction of the Center, is completely independent of Hovakimyan, whose intelligence activities under the cover of our AMTORG company are carried out without connection with the action against Trotsky.

Stalin confirmed his previous decision, noting:

- Action against Trotsky will mean the collapse of the entire Trotskyist movement. And we will not have to spend money to fight them and their attempts to undermine the Comintern and our connections with the left circles abroad. Proceed with the alternative plan, despite the failure of Siqueiros, and send a telegram to Eitingon expressing our full confidence.

I prepared the text of the telegram and added at the end: "Pavel sends his best wishes."

"Pavel" was Beria's code name.

When I was arrested in 1953, the investigators, looking through the materials of the operation "Duck" in my working documents stored in a safe, asked who was hiding under the name "Pavel". I did not consider it necessary to emphasize that Eitingon highly valued Beria, who by this time had been arrested and shot, and said that this was my name, added to confirm the authenticity of the message being sent.

The time was already late, eleven in the evening, and Stalin invited Beria and me to stay for dinner. I remember the food was the simplest. Stalin, joking about the fact that I do not drink, suggested that I try Georgian wine mixed with Lagidze sparkling water. This water was daily delivered to him by plane from Georgia. Contrary to what is being written about it now, Stadii was not at all furious about the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Trotsky. If he was angry, he masked it well. Outwardly, he looked calm and ready to complete the operation to destroy his enemy, putting the fate of the entire agent network surrounded by Trotsky at stake.

Eitingon later told me that Ramon Mercader volunteered for the task himself, using the knowledge he had gained during the guerrilla war in Spain. During this war, he learned not only to shoot, but also mastered the technique of hand-to-hand combat. Considering that our people at that time did not have special equipment at their disposal, Mercader was ready to shoot, stab or kill the enemy by striking with a heavy object. Karidad gave her son her "blessing". When Eitingon and she met with Ramon to

analyze the security system at Trotsky's villa and choose a murder weapon, they came to the conclusion that it is best to use a mountaineer's knife or small ice ax: firstly, they are easier to hide from the guards, and secondly, these murder weapons are silent, so that none of the home environment will not have time to come running to help. Physically Ramon was enough strong.

It was also important to put forward a suitable motive for the assassination in order to compromise Trotsky and thus discredit his movement. The murder was supposed to look like an act of personal revenge on Trotsky, who allegedly tried to dissuade Sylvia Agelof from marrying Mercader. If Mercader had been captured, he should have stated that the Trotskyists intended to use the funds donated by him for personal purposes, and not at all for the needs of the movement, and report that Trotsky tried to persuade him to join an international terrorist organization that aimed to kill Stalin and other Soviet leaders .

On a winter evening in early 1969, I met Ramon Mercader at Eitingon's apartment, then we went to dinner at the restaurant of the House of Writers in Moscow. Almost three decades have passed since we last met. And only now Ramon was able to tell me in full detail about what happened on August 20, 1940.

At a meeting with his mother and Eitingon at a safe house in Mexico City, Eitingon, according to Ramon, proposed the following: while Mercader was at Trotsky's villa, Eitingon himself, Caridad, and a group of five militants would attempt to break into the villa. A shootout with the guards will begin, during which Mercader will be able to eliminate Trotsky.

"I," Mercader told me, "did not agree with this plan and convinced him that one I will carry out the death sentence.

Contrary to what has been written about the assassination itself, Ramon did not close his eyes before hitting Trotsky on the head with a small, sharp ice pick that was hidden under his cloak. Trotsky sat at his desk and read Mercader's article written in his defence. As Mercader prepared to strike, Trotsky, absorbed in reading the article, turned his head slightly, and this changed the direction of the blow, weakening its force. That is why Trotsky was not killed immediately and screamed for help. Ramon was confused and could not stab Trotsky, although he had a knife with him.

"Imagine, after all, I went through a guerrilla war and stabbed a sentry on a bridge during the Spanish Civil War, but Trotsky's cry literally paralyzed me," Ramon explained.

When Trotsky's wife ran into the room with bodyguards, Mercader was knocked down and unable to use his pistol. However, this turned out not to be necessary. Trotsky died the next day in the hospital.

I was knocked down with the butt of a pistol by one of Trotsky's bodyguards. Then my lawyer used this episode to prove that I was not a professional killer. I held to the version that I was driven by love for Sylvia and that the Trotskyists were squandering the funds that I donated to their movement and trying to involve me in terrorist activities," Mercader told me. - I did not deviate from the agreed version: my actions are caused by purely personal motives.

Our original plan was that Trotsky would be killed quietly and that Ramon would be able to get away unnoticed - after all, Mercader visited the villa regularly and the guards knew him well. Eitingon and Caridad, who were waiting for Ramon in a car not far from the villa, were forced to hide when an obvious commotion began in the house. They first fled to Cuba, where Caridad, using her family connections, managed to go underground. Grigulevich fled from Mexico City to California - few people knew him there.

The first message came to us in Moscow through TASS channels. Then, a week later, Eitingon sent a coded radio message from Cuba, again via Paris.

ut operations will be awarded only after returning to Moscow. As for me, I was too busy at that moment with our affairs in Latvia to think any further about the Trotsky affair. Beria asked me if Caridad, Eitingon and Grigulevich managed to escape and hide safely. I replied that they had a good hiding place unknown to Mercader. Arrested Mercader as Frank Jackson, a Canadian businessman, and his real name

the authorities did not know for six years.

Ramon also reminded me that I had given him and his mother advice at a meeting in Paris: if any of you are caught, start a hunger strike in prison, but try not to arouse unnecessary suspicions in your jailers. At first, eat less and less each time, preparing for a complete rejection of food. In the end, they will begin artificial feeding, and the investigation period will stretch for an indefinitely long time, and passions will cool down. This is what you will need.

Mercader went on a hunger strike for two or three months, during the investigation he claimed that he was one of Trotsky's angry supporters. He was beaten twice a day by members of the Mexican special services - and this went on for six years until his true name was revealed. In addition, he was kept all this time in a cell where there was no window.

Beria announced to me his decision to spare no means to protect Mercader. The lawyers had to prove that the murder was committed on the basis of squabbles and internal discord in the Trotskyist movement. Eitingon and Caridad were ordered to remain underground. They spent half a year in Cuba, and then sailed to New York, where Eitingon used his contacts in the Jewish community to get new documents and passports. Together with Caridad, he crossed America and came to Los Angeles, and then to San Francisco. Eitingon took the opportunity to renew contacts with two agents he and Serebryansky had sent to California in the early 1930s, who took over the duties of liaison to the illegal spy ring that had mined American nuclear secrets from 1942 to 1945. In February 1941, Eitingon and Caridad sailed for China by steamer. In May 1941, just before the start of the Great Patriotic War, they returned to Moscow from Shanghai along the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The secret services managed to establish Mercader's identity only after one of the prominent figures of the Spanish Communist Party, who had been in Moscow before his escape, defected to the West in 1946. By the way, this man was a distant relative of Fidel Castro. Caridad bears part of the blame for the information leak. During the war, Ramon's mother was evacuated from Moscow to Tashkent, where she lived from 1941 to 1943. It was there that she told her friend that Ramon had killed Trotsky. Caridad was convinced that he would keep what he said a secret.

After the end of the Second World War, Caridad repeatedly tried to obtain the release of Ramon, even offered to find a wife for him, but Stalin opposed this plan, since Ramon's personality still attracted a lot of attention. Caridad went to Mexico, then to Paris, took all measures for the early release of her son.

When the Mercader dossier was brought to Mexico from the Spanish police archives, his identity was established, it became pointless to deny it. In the face of irrefutable evidence, Frank Jackson admitted that he was in fact Ramon Mercader and comes from a wealthy Spanish family. But he never admitted that he killed Trotsky on the orders of Soviet intelligence. In all his open statements, Mercader invariably emphasized the personal motive for this murder.

Ramon's conditions in prison immediately improved after the defector's real name was revealed, and he was even allowed to make occasional forays into Mexico City, where he could dine in a restaurant with his jailer. The woman who looked after Ramon in prison fell in love with him and now visited him weekly. He later married her and brought her with him to Moscow when he was released from prison.

August 20, 1960 He served twenty years in prison.

Until 1960, Ramon had never been to Moscow. He lived here in 1939-1942. bride who died of tuberculosis.

In Moscow, Mercader was received by KGB chairman Shelepin, who presented him with the Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union. However, when some time later Mercader asked for a meeting with the new KGB chairman Semichastny, he was denied. By special decision of the Central Committee of the party and at the personal request of Dolores Ibarruri (Pasionaria), Mercader was hired as a senior researcher at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow. In addition, he and his wife were given a state dacha in Kratov, near Moscow. Mercader received money from the Central Committee and from the KGB. In total, this was equal to the pension of a retired major general. However, his relations with the KGB remained quite tense throughout the 1960s: he did not cease to demand, first from Shelepin, and then from Semichastny, that Eitingon and I be immediately released from prison. He raised this issue with both Dolores Ibarruri and Suslov. The oldest member of the Politburo, Suslov, was not touched by this intercession; moreover, in anger at the fact that Mercader allowed himself to address him personally, he told Mercader: "We decided for ourselves the fate of these people once and for all. Don't poke your nose into other people's business."

At first, Mercader lived in the Leningradskaya Hotel near the Leningradsky railway station, and then received a four-room apartment without any furnishings near the Sokol metro station. Of those who were once associated with Mercader at work, Vasilevsky remained the only one who was not subjected to repression, although he was expelled from the party. He stood up for Mercader - and furniture was provided for his new apartment. Mercader's wife, Roquel Mendoza, worked as an announcer in the Spanish edition of Moscow Radio. In 1963, they adopted two children: a twelve-year-old boy, Arthur, and a six-month-old girl, Laura. Their parents were friends of Mercader. His father, a participant in the Spanish Civil War, fled to Moscow after the defeat of the Republicans, and later, returning to his homeland as an illegal agent, was captured by the Francoists and shot. Mother died in Moscow during childbirth.

Mercader was a professional revolutionary and was proud of his role in the struggle for communist ideals. He did not repent that he had killed Trotsky, and in a conversation with me he said:

If I had to relive the forties, I would do everything I did, but just not in today's world. No one can choose the time in which you live.

In the mid-70s, Mercader left Moscow for Cuba, where he was an adviser to Castro. He died in 1978. His body was secretly delivered to Moscow. Mercader's widow tried to contact me, but I was not in Moscow at the time. Eitingon attended the funeral ceremony. Mercader was buried at the Kuntsevo cemetery. There he rests under the name of Ramon Ivanovich Lopez, Hero of the Soviet Union.

It is quite clear to me that today's moral principles are incompatible with the cruelty that characterizes both the period of the struggle for power that follows the revolutionary upheaval and the civil war. Stalin and Trotsky opposed each other, resorting to criminal methods to achieve their goals, but the difference is that in exile Trotsky opposed not only Stalin, but also the Soviet Union as such. This confrontation was a war of annihilation. Stalin and we could not treat Trotsky in exile simply as an author of philosophical writings. Trotsky was an active enemy of the Soviet state.

Life has shown that the hatred of Stalin and the leaders of the CPSU (b) for political degenerates and rivals in the struggle for power was justified. The decisive blow to the CPSU and the Soviet Union was dealt precisely by a group of former party leaders. At the same time, these figures masked the initial narrowly selfish interests of the struggle for power with the slogans borrowed from Trotsky "of the fight against bureaucracy and the domination of the party apparatus."

Trotsky's son, Lev Sedov, who bore his mother's surname, was under our constant surveillance. He was the main organizer of the Trotskyist movement in Europe after he came to Paris from Turkey in 1933. We had in Paris two intelligence outlets to him, independent of each other. In one, the leading role was played by Zborovsky (underground nickname "Etienne", also known as "Tulip"). Volkogonov wrote about him in detail. The other was headed by Serebryansky. Zborovsky led us on the trail of Trotsky's archives, and Serebryansky, using the information received, seized these archives hidden in Paris and secretly delivered them to Moscow. He did this with the help of his agent "Harry", who was in Paris, and an agent who worked in the French police.

In the book "Trotsky", Volkogonov claims that the archives were taken out by Zborovsky, when in fact he had no idea how the information he obtained was used. Volkogonov also writes that Zborovsky helped kill Sedov, who was in a French hospital at the time. Trotsky's son, as you know, did die in February 1938 under very mysterious circumstances, after an appendicitis operation.

It is only known for certain that Sedov died in Paris, but neither in his dossier, nor in the materials on the Trotskyist International, I found any evidence that it was a murder. If Sedov had been killed, then someone would have to receive a government award or could claim it. At the time in question, there were many accusations against the intelligence service, which allegedly attributed non-existent laurels to itself for the elimination of prominent Trotskyists, but no details

or no examples were given. It is generally accepted that Sedov fell victim to an operation carried out by the NKVD. Meanwhile Shpigelglas, reporting to Yezhov about Sedov's death in Paris, mentioned only the natural cause of his death. Yezhov, however, commented on the message with the words: "Good operation! Good job, huh?" Spiegelglas had no intention of arguing with the people's commissar, who tried to attribute the merit of the "murder" of Sedov to his department and personally reported this to Stalin. This contributed to the NKVD being held responsible for Sedov's death.

When Eitingon and I discussed with Beria the plan to liquidate Trotsky, the elimination of his son was never mentioned. It is easy to assume, of course, that Sedov was killed, but personally I am not inclined to believe this. And the reason is the simplest. Trotsky implicitly trusted his son, so he was closely monitored on our part, and this made it possible to receive information about the plans of the Trotskyists to send agents and propaganda materials to the Soviet Union through Europe. Its destruction would lead to us losing control over information about Trotskyist operations in Europe.

After the liquidation of Trotsky, part of the agents recruited by Eitingon and other persons involved in his network, operating in the United States and Mexico, joined the illegals not involved in the operation against Trotsky. This extended network of agents later played an important role in reaching the circles of scientists working on the American atomic bomb. Our illegal immigrants with false documents, who did not hold any official positions, settled in the United States in the late 20s and early 30s. Their main task was to enter a job where you can have access to scientific and technical information and military-strategic transportation in the event of a war with Japan.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Eitingon and Serebryansky were sent to the United States to recruit Chinese and Japanese emigrants who could be useful to us in military and sabotage operations against Japan. By this time, the Japanese had managed to capture the central and northern regions of China and Manchuria, and we feared the impending war with Japan. At the same time, Eitingon introduced two agents for long-term settlement - Polish Jews, whom he managed to bring to the United States from France.

Eitingon also had to assess the potential capabilities of the American Communists in the interests of our intelligence. At his very sensible suggestion,

it was necessary to recruit agents from members of the Communist Party, but it made sense to focus on those who, not being in its ranks, expressed sympathy for communist ideas.

Eitingon acted in parallel with Akhmerov, who, despite Eitingon's serious objections, nevertheless married the niece of Earl Browder, the founder of the American Communist Party. Operations in the United States and the creation of a network of illegals there were not among the Kremlin's most important goals, since at that time obtaining intelligence from the New Council did not influence Moscow's decisions. Eitingon, however, assigned several of his agents to monitor American policy toward China. He, in particular, managed to find journalists from the magazine "Amereisha", who subsequently formed a lobby that influenced the American line of diplomacy in Asia.

One of the agents recruited by Eitingon was the very famous Japanese painter Miyagi, who later joined Richard Sorge's group in Japan. Eitingon and my good friend Ivan Vinarov (an intelligence adviser under Georgy Dimitrov in the 1940s) made contact with Sorge in Shanghai in the late 1920s. Sorge's information was regarded as quite valuable throughout the 30s, however, with the proviso that both the Germans and the Japanese consider him a double agent.

Our agent "Friend" - the Consul General of Germany in Shanghai - often met with Sorge in 1939-1941. He noted his broad awareness of the situation in the Far East, unaware of Sorge's work for the Red Army Intelligence Directorate, and emphasized Sorge's strong, solid ties with German military intelligence.

In 1932, Eitingon left California and returned to the Soviet Union via Shanghai. He was appointed deputy Serebryansky, but they did not work well, and Eitingon moved to a leadership position in the Foreign Department of the OGPU.

During the period of aggravation of the international situation on the eve of America's entry into the war, intelligence work along the lines of the NKVD on the East Coast of the United States was headed by Kheifets. Previously, he worked in the Comintern. His father was one of the organizers of the American Communist Party. Heifetz personally knew many prominent American communists. Given the experience of the Comintern, he was sent in the early 30s to work in the intelligence of the NKVD. He organized illegal groups in Germany and Italy in the mid-1930s, acting as an Indian student studying in Europe. Heifetz was actually Jewish, but his dark skin made him look like a true Asian immigrant, despite his blue eyes. In the United States, he was known in leftist circles as Mr. Brown.

While previously in Italy, Heifetz met the young Bruno Pontecorvo, then a student studying in Rome. Heifetz recommended that Pontecorvo contact Frédéric Joliot-Curie, an eminent French physicist close to the leadership of the French Communist Party. In the future, it was Pontecorvo who became the channel through which we received American atomic secrets from Enrico Fermi.

Heifetz was lucky: in the 30s he was not repressed. He was recalled to Moscow, and although in November 1938 Yezhov ordered his arrest, it was not carried out. Soon Heifetz was sent to the United States, to the West Coast, to intensify intelligence work.

Heifetz was given the task of establishing strong ties with the "deep settling" agents created by Eitingon for use in the event of a war between the Soviet Union and Japan. The original plan was to create a network of illegal immigrants in American ports, following the example of Scandinavia, to destroy ships with strategic raw materials and fuel for Japan. Unaware of Japanese intentions to attack Southeast Asia or Pearl Harbor, we assumed that they would first launch military operations against us.

Heifetz's assistant at the San Francisco consulate, Lyapin, an engineer and a graduate of the Leningrad Shipbuilding Institute, was given the special task of obtaining data on technological innovations from West Coast enterprises. Main

the task assigned to him is to collect materials on the American naval shipbuilding programs. I remember one of his reports. It spoke of the great interest that the Americans showed in the aircraft carrier construction program. Lyagin also managed to recruit an agent in San Francisco, who gave us a description of the devices being developed to protect ships from magnetic mines.

In order not to arouse suspicion, Lyagin refrained from any contact with American pro-communist circles. However, he did not work long in San Francisco. He was recalled to Moscow and promoted to the post of deputy head of the NKVD overseas intelligence. He was only thirty-two years old. During the German occupation, he was sent by us as an illegal resident to the German naval base at Nikolaev on the Black Sea. He managed to carry out a number of sabotage on the base. The Gestapo eventually captured him and the group's radio operator. Lyagin refused to escape from prison, as he could not leave the wounded radio operator arrested with him. They were shot. In 1945 he was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Heifetz, who remained in San Francisco, managed, having received an orientation from Eitingon, to reach the previously introduced two "deep subsidence" agents. Both of them led the usual, inconspicuous life of ordinary Americans: one - a dentist, the other - the owner of a retail business. Both were Jewish emigrants from Poland. A dentist, personally known to Serebryansky, once received money from us in order to graduate from a medical college in France and become a certified specialist. Both of these people were embedded in case we needed their services, whether in a year or ten years. The need for them arose in 1941-1942, when these people unexpectedly found themselves close to the communist-minded members of the family of Robert Oppenheimer, the main creator of the American atomic bomb.

MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT

In May 1937, Tukhachevsky's group of eight people, who were the color of the Soviet military command, was arrested, they were accused of high treason, espionage and a secret military conspiracy to overthrow the government. Only two weeks passed, and by the verdict of a closed military court, they were all shot. Thus began mass repressions in the army, as a result of which thirty-five thousand commanders suffered.

The most famous of this group of military leaders was Marshal Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky, who for a long time was Deputy People's Commissar of Defense and Chief of the General Staff. It is known from archival materials now being published that the accusations against Tukhachevsky and other military leaders of the country were fabricated at the direction of Stalin and Voroshilov.

Currently, there are three versions of why Stalin went to this massacre. In accordance with the first, the fate of these people was decided by the disinformation of the German and Czechoslovak special services, which convinced the suspicious Stalin and his People's Commissar for Defense Voroshilov that Tukhachevsky and a number of other military leaders maintained secret contacts with German military circles. It was this version that Khrushchev repeated in his speech criticizing Stalin at the 22nd Party Congress in 1961.

But contacts with the Germans must be seen against the backdrop of close German-Soviet military cooperation in the 1920s and 1930s. A long period of military cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union was abruptly interrupted by Stalin in 1933 under the obviously fabricated pretext that the Germans were secretly sharing information with the French about their connections with us. Meanwhile, a group of Soviet military leaders headed by Marshal Tukhachevsky noted the usefulness of these contacts with the Germans and hoped to use their technological military innovations with us. On the part of Germany, there was also a certain interest in continuing ties with the USSR, although for completely different reasons.

High-ranking military men, immigrants from East Prussia, were followers of the founder of the Wehrmacht, General Hans von Seeckt. After the defeat in the First World War, General von Seeckt spent many years recreating the German military machine and developing a new strategic doctrine. It was he who spoke to the German leadership for improving relations with the USSR, pointing out that the main goal of German policy in the event of war was to prevent military operations on two fronts.

In accordance with the second version, the victims were those military men who, in terms of their intellectual level, significantly exceeded Voroshilov and had their own opinion on issues of military development. Tukhachevsky and his group allegedly did not agree with Stalin and Voroshilov on the issue of a strategist and military reforms, and therefore Stalin, fearing rivals who could claim power, decided to deal with them.

According to the third version, the military was liquidated due to a long-standing enmity between Tukhachevsky and Stalin, who had different points of view on who was responsible for the mistakes made in the war with the White Poles in 1920. Tukhachevsky believed that the Red Army was defeated on the outskirts of Warsaw, because Stalin and Voroshilov allegedly refused to transfer cavalry troops to help Tukhachevsky

parts.

My view of this tragedy is different from all known versions. I remember how in August 1939 I was pleasantly surprised by reports from Germany, from which it was clear that the German military leadership highly appreciated the potential of the Red Army. In one of the documents of the German high command, intercepted by us, the cause of the death of Marshal Tukhachevsky was his exorbitant ambitions and disagreements with Marshal Voroshilov, who unquestioningly shared all the views of Stalin.

Approving a summary of intelligence materials for Stalin, Beria included a phrase from this document: "The elimination of Tukhachevsky clearly shows that Stalin is in complete control of the state of affairs in the Red Army," perhaps in order to flatter the leader, thereby emphasizing his far-sightedness in the timely elimination Tukhachevsky.

I also remember the commentary of Beria and Abakumov, during the war years the head of the SMERSH military counterintelligence, who was also responsible for the political reliability of the armed forces. Both spoke about the arrogance of Tukhachevsky and his entourage, who dared to think that Stalin, at their suggestion, would remove Voroshilov. According to Beria, this fact alone clearly showed that the military, grossly violating the established order, put forward proposals that went beyond their competence. Didn't they know, he said, that only the Politburo and no one else had the right to raise the question of replacing the people's commissar for defense? It was then that they remembered, Abakumov emphasized, that Tukhachevsky and people close to him allowed themselves to call military bands to their dachas for private concerts.

I learned from Marshal Shaposhnikov, who replaced Tukhachevsky, how one should behave strictly according to the rules "at the top". There was a war going on, in a very difficult period of fighting near Moscow, given the urgency of reports from the German rear, I reported materials directly to him a couple of times, bypassing the usual channels. And every time he politely pointed out to me: "My dear, you must necessarily reflect important intelligence in the reports of the NKVD and the political leadership of the country. Stalin, Beria and at the same time the People's Commissar of Defense must be fully aware of our joint work.

Another circumstance that played a role in the fate of Tukhachevsky: he was on bad terms with Shaposhnikov. In the late 1920s, Tukhachevsky, I was told, was intriguing against Shaposhnikov in order to take over his post as Chief of the General Staff. By the way, Shaposhnikov was one of the members of the special presence of the Supreme Court, which pronounced the death sentence on Tukhachevsky. He, Budyonny and the chairman of the court, Ulrich, were the only ones out of its entire composition who escaped repression and died of natural causes.

It seems to me that Tukhachevsky and his group, in the struggle for influence over Stalin, fell for his bait. During frequent meetings with Stalin, Tukhachevsky criticized Voroshilov, Stalin encouraged this criticism, calling it "constructive", and liked to discuss options for new appointments and removals. He also liked to consider different approaches to military doctrines. Tukhachevsky allowed himself to freely discuss all this not only behind closed doors, but also to spread rumors about supposedly upcoming changes and reshuffles in the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense. In a word, he and his colleagues went, in Stalin's opinion, too far. After the NKVD reported to the government about the rumors circulating in the capital, this began to worry the country's leadership. Even those historians who are eager to expose Stalin's crimes cannot but admit that the materials of the Tukhachevsky case contain all sorts of documentary evidence regarding plans to reshuffle the country's military leadership.

In the published archives of the Red Army, you can, for example, read a letter to Voroshilov dated June 5, 1937, signed by the head of the secretariat of the People's Commissariat of Defense Smorodinov. It contains a request to send copies of Tukhachevsky's letters to the military leadership to the NKVD. And although there is no resolution on the document, it is clear that during the "investigation" Tukhachevsky strongly objected to the accusations, referring to documents confirming that there were no disagreements between him, Voroshilov and Stalin on military issues.

Tukhachevsky claimed that he maintained contacts with German military representatives solely on instructions from the government. He did his best to prove that he always saw his duty in the unquestioning execution of orders on all matters of military development.

Khrushchev's version that Stalin "swallowed" German disinformation designed to destroy Tukhachevsky was based on the fabrications of the Soviet defector Krivitsky, author of the 1939 book *I Was Stalin's Agent*. Krivitsky worked for the NKVD and military intelligence in Western Europe and wrote in his book that the NKVD received secret information about the conspiracy from Czech President Eduard Beneš and our top agent Skoblin (code name "Farmer"), a former white general who participated in the civil war. Krivitsky accused Skoblin of passing on German disinformation to the Soviets about Tukhachevsky's secret contacts with German military circles. Later, General Schellenberg, head of Hitler's foreign intelligence, also wrote in his memoirs that the Germans fabricated documents in which Tukhachevsky appeared as their agent. Before the war, according to him, the documents were planted on the Czechs, and Benes passed the information received to Stalin.

For me, this is a myth. Such documents have never been found in the archives of the KGB or the archives of Stalin himself.

But if you restore the sequence of events, you can see that Skoblin, as an agent of the Gestapo, was first written by the newspaper Pravda in 1937. The article was agreed with the intelligence leadership and published in order to divert attention from accusations of Soviet intelligence involvement in the kidnapping of General Miller.

The criminal case against Tukhachevsky was entirely based on his own confessions, and there are absolutely no references to specific incriminating facts received from abroad. If such documents existed, then I, as the deputy head of intelligence, who oversaw the German direction on the eve of the war, would certainly have seen them or knew about their existence. The only mention of the "German trace" in the Skoblin case is a reference to his deceptive maneuver, which managed to lure General Miller to a safe house in Paris. Skoblin spoke to Miller about "German contacts" that are important for the secret work of the white emigration. Miller met not with the Germans, but with the NKVD resident in Paris, Kislov (codename Finn) and Spiegelglas (codename Douglas).

By the way, contrary to the versions of events in the books popular in the West by Christopher Andrew and

Gordlevsky, John Dzhizyak and Krivitsky Skoblin did not take part in the elimination of Miller's predecessor, General Kutepov. This operation in 1930 was carried out by the intelligence service of Serebryansky. Kutepov was detained in the center of Paris by three of our agents dressed as French gendarmerie officers. They stopped Kutepov on the street under the pretext of checking documents and forcibly put him into a car. Kutepov, suspecting something was wrong, resisted. During the fight he suffered a heart attack and died. He was buried in the suburbs of Paris, in the courtyard of the house of one of the agents of Soviet intelligence.

So, in reality, there is no evidence of unauthorized contacts between Tukhachevsky and the Germans. But in the archives there are many materials containing reviews of the foreign press and responses from the leaders of Western countries about the Tukhachevsky conspiracy.

In July 1937, Aleksandrovsky, the Soviet plenipotentiary in Czechoslovakia, reported to Moscow about the reaction of President Beneš to the execution of Tukhachevsky. There are the most contradictory interpretations of the remarks of Beneš, who is portrayed by Soviet historians as a man who "sincerely and with the best intentions betrayed Tukhachevsky to Stalin, not realizing that he was handing over materials falsified by the Germans to the Soviets." The documents, however, tell a very different story.

According to Aleksandrovsky, Beneš did not believe that Tukhachevsky was a spy and saboteur. According to Beneš, Tukhachevsky "could count on the overthrow of Stalin only by relying on Yagoda, the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR." Based on information from the Czech ambassador in Berlin, Beneš noted: Tukhachevsky simply advocated the continuation of Soviet-German cooperation, which was interrupted with Hitler's rise to power. It is clear that Beneš did not take Tukhachevsky's accusations of espionage seriously, but he felt that for one reason or another the marshal was in disgrace, and he contributed to the discrediting of Tukhachevsky, since he needed Stalin's support. He, like Beria, wanted to show his full approval of Moscow's decision to liquidate Tukhachevsky. Aleksandrovsky's diary contains a statement by Beneš in which he speaks of

Tukhachevsky as an adventurer and unreliable person. By and large, Beneš supported the massacre of Tukhachevsky, but did not play any role in his removal and arrest.

As far as I remember, in the letter file "Khutor" there are references to the fact that Beneš in April 1937, on the eve of the removal of Tukhachevsky, hinted to Plenipotentiary Aleksandrovsky and our resident in Prague, Petr Zubov, that he did not exclude the possibility of a military agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union, contrary to their current differences, partly due to the good ties between the Red Army and the Wehrmacht established by Tukhachevsky in the 20s and 30s. However, only on July 4, 1937, after the execution of Tukhachevsky, Beneš told Aleksandrovsky about "certain" contacts of the Czech ambassador in Berlin with German military representatives, which allegedly took place in January 1937. According to him, Beneš did not tell us that the Czechs had information about the presence in Germany of an influential group among the military who advocated the continuation of secret German-Soviet military ties established back in the 1920s.

From his ambassador in Berlin, Beneš received a report containing vague hints from the German generals about their confidential relationship with the leadership of the Red Army. The purpose of this German disinformation was to frighten the Czechs into believing that they could not count on the support of the Red Army in their confrontation with Germany over the fate of the Sudetenland. This was in July 1937 - a year before Hitler's ultimatum to Beneš, demanding that the Sudetenland, with their ethnic German population went to Germany. In his diary, the ambassador writes that Beneš apologized to him for not sharing with the Soviet leadership information about possible secret contacts between the top of the Wehrmacht and the headquarters of the Red Army.

From the materials of the case mentioned above, the real purpose of the July meeting between Plenipotentiary Aleksandrovsky, NKVD resident Zubov and Beneš.

Now the content of the conversation between Beneš and Aleksandrovsky is denied. Another important circumstance is also hushed up: in 1935 the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia signed a secret agreement on cooperation between intelligence services. To resolve this issue, the head of Czech intelligence, Colonel Moravec, visited Moscow. The cooperation of Soviet and Czech intelligence, the exchange of information was initially coordinated by the Intelligence Agency of the Red Army, and in 1937 - by the NKVD. In 1938, Beneš turned to Stalin with a request to support his actions to overthrow the Stojadinovic government in Belgrade, which pursued a policy hostile to the Czech leadership.

By special order of Stalin, in order to support the coup in Belgrade in 1938, the NKVD was entrusted with the financing of Serbian militant officers - the organizers of this coup. Our resident Zubov, having left for Belgrade to transfer money to the conspirators, made sure that the people selected by the Czech intelligence for this action - adventurers, do not rely on real power, and did not give them 200 thousand dollars. This failed operation sheds light on hitherto unknown connections between Beneš and Stalin. Beneš's goal was to obtain full support for Czech policy from Stalin, both in the Balkans and in Europe as a whole. That is why, unlike the British and (the French), he did not express his disapproval of the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and the wave of repression among

Soviet military command.

I have heard that there are still highly secret materials of the Tukhachevsky case, kept in the archives of the Stalinist secretariat and containing information received from abroad. I think that these are just reviews of materials from the foreign press, reports of TASS correspondents, diplomats, heads of trade missions, as well as NKVD and GRU residencies about how the massacre of Tukhachevsky was assessed abroad.

These were the materials of a special folder of closed foreign correspondence, which collected reviews of foreign public opinion and comments from Soviet ambassadors and heads of government delegations. In this storage there are German, (French and English) recordings of conversations with high-ranking Soviet representatives obtained through intelligence channels. They were valuable because they helped to understand the mindset of the people with whom negotiations were being conducted.

The tragedy, however, was that Stalin, and later Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev, used classified foreign correspondence to compromise their rivals at a time of intense power struggles. In ordinary times, reviews of the foreign press were not given any serious importance, but during the period of mass repressions, it became the rule to resort to these materials, which assessed Soviet leaders, in order to incriminate them with various kinds of "deviations" from the party line. Moreover, this rule was even enshrined in a special resolution of the Central

committee.

In 1989, Boris Yeltsin, during his first visit to the United States, was accused, referring to the foreign press, of addiction to alcohol. In 1990, these materials played a role in the conflict between Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, the former foreign minister. The use of clippings from the foreign press was stopped only in November 1991, just before the end of the "Gorbachev era". And Ignatenko, the general director of TASS, did this by banning special reviews of the foreign press from being sent to the government through TASS that contained compromising information on our leaders.

In the 1930s, it seemed to us that anyone who opposes the government or the party leadership, primarily against Stalin himself, as well as his colleague People's Commissar Voroshilov, is an enemy of the people. Only much later did the full cynicism of the remarks of Beria and Abakumov about Tukhachevsky reach me. The top leadership knew perfectly well that all the charges against him were fictitious. They preferred the version of an imaginary conspiracy, because otherwise they would have to admit that rivals in the struggle for power actually become victims of repression. Such recognition would harm the prestige

ruling party.

What in 1937 was considered a serious crime - I mean the accusation of Voroshilov's incompetence, which Tukhachevsky allowed himself - twenty years later, when he was posthumously rehabilitated, was no longer such. And no one explained the real reasons for the crime. In official reports, only very vague references to "mistakes" in the punitive policy appeared, only Yezhov and his henchmen were named as the culprits.

In April 1938, the NKVD resident in Finland, Rybkin, was summoned to the Kremlin, where Stalin and other members of the Politburo entrusted him with a top secret mission... He was instructed to informally propose a secret agreement to the Finnish government. The Finns were guaranteed economic cooperation with the Soviet Union, taking into account their interests in Scandinavia and Europe, in exchange for the signing of a non-aggression pact, economic and military cooperation in the event of aggression by a third party. The pact promised economic benefits for both sides. Stalin's proposal also included the division of the spheres of military and economic influence in the Baltic region between Finland and the Soviet Union. On Stalin's instructions, Rybkin also donated \$100,000 to create a party of petty proprietors that advocated a neutral Finland.

Rybkin, during a conversation in the Kremlin, expressed doubt that the Finns, who were then hostile to their eastern neighbor, would agree to signing such an agreement, but Stalin stressed that this was a sounding, so proposals should be made orally, without participation in the negotiations of our envoy, that is, unofficially. Rybkin did as he was ordered, but the offer was rejected. However, it initiated a split in the Finnish leadership, which we later exploited by signing a separate peace treaty with Finland in 1944. By the way, this was done through the mediation of the Swedish Wallenberg family. Our attempts to find secret approaches to Mannerheim were also unsuccessful, through his former colleague in the tsarist army, Count Ignatiev, who joined the Red Army in the 1920s.

I am not aware of any such informal proposals to the German side, but I believe that the President of Finland, Marshal Carl Gustav Mannerheim, informed Hitler of our proposals, so that the Führer, sending his Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop to Moscow in August 1939 to negotiate the signing non-aggression pact, relied not only on the spontaneous reaction of Molotov and Stanin. He was aware that we were ready to accept an offer of this kind, since we ourselves had already tried to conclude a similar agreement with neighboring Finland.

Finland's refusal followed in the same month of 1938. It was much more important for the Finns to remain allies of England, Sweden and Germany. In addition, they did not see any benefits for themselves in the army of the buffer zone between East and West. Later, however, this role was nevertheless imposed on them. For the fact that Finland attacked the Soviet Union along with the Germans, she had to pay a heavy price. As a result, the Finns received much less favorable terms for themselves than those originally offered by Rybkin in 1938.

In August 1939, the volume of intelligence information increased dramatically. We received a reliable report that (the French and British governments are not eager to support the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany. This was quite consistent with the information we received three or four years earlier from the Cambridge group. According to this information, the British Cabinet of Ministers, more precisely, Neville Chamberlain and Sir John Simon, considered the possibility of a secret agreement with Hitler to support him in a military confrontation with the Soviet Union. Special attention deserves the information of three reliable sources from Germany: the leadership of the Wehrmacht strongly objected to a war on two (fronts).

The directives we received obligated us to quickly consider possible options for cooperation with countries ready to sign agreements to counteract the outbreak of war. It was not only about England and France, with which

consultations from the beginning of 1938, but also about Germany. In Germany, only people from East Prussia advocated for a peaceful settlement of relations with the Soviet Union among the influential military.

Considering, in accordance with the directives received, alternative options (either an agreement with the British and French, or a peaceful settlement with Germany), I could not even imagine that the economic negotiations would end with a pact on cooperation between Berlin and Moscow. When I was informed of the imminent arrival of the German Foreign Minister in Moscow on August 23, 1939 - only a few hours before it happened - I was surprised. After the arrival of Ribbentrop and the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact thirteen hours later (this event took place in the Kremlin at two in the morning on August 24), it became clear that the decision was not sudden. The strategic goal of the Soviet leadership was to avoid at any cost a war on two fronts - in the Far East and in Europe. This line of diplomatic relations, not tied to ideological considerations, has been established since the 1920s, when the Soviet Union carried out economic cooperation and maintained normal relations with Italy after the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini came to power in 1922. The Kremlin leadership was ready to compromise with any regime, provided that it guaranteed the stability of the Soviet Union. For Stalin and his entourage, the realization of their geopolitical aspirations to transform the Soviet Union into the most powerful power in the world has always been a priority.

The country was able to develop more or less steadily only after the completion of collectivization in 1934. Prior to that, we had consistently experienced civil war, famine, devastation. And only by the mid-30s did industrialization begin to bear fruit. The growing power of the state was demonstrated in the successful military operations against Japan in Mongolia and Manchuria. Although the country has established diplomatic relations with all the leading powers of the world, we are nevertheless kept in isolation, which was clearly manifested when the world powers did not allow us to participate in solving cardinal world issues on which their interests depended. All agreements on Europe and Asia were accepted by Western countries and Japan to the detriment of the interests of the Soviet Union. The Anglo-German agreement of 1935, which recognized the rearmament of the German naval forces, and subsequent agreements between the leading powers of the world to equip their fleets with modern weapons, did not even mention the Soviet Union.

The French and British delegations that arrived in Moscow in the summer of 1939 to probe the ground for a possible alliance against Hitler consisted of minor figures. Thus, Stalin's policy towards Hitler was based on the correct idea that the hostility of the Western world and Japan to the Soviet system would make the isolation of the USSR from the international community a permanent factor.

Looking back, one cannot but conclude that all three future allies in the anti-Hitler coalition - the USSR, Britain and France - are to blame for allowing Hitler to unleash the Second World War. Mutual hostility and contradictions - this is what prevented the achievement of a compromise between Britain and France, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other. A compromise that would allow us to jointly stop Hitler's aggression against Poland. For some reason, historians of the Second World War lose sight of the fact that the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations in 1939 were actually launched on the initiative of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Donald MacLean reported that Roosevelt sent a representative to British Prime Minister Chamberlain with a warning that German dominance in Western Europe would be detrimental to both American and British interests. Roosevelt urged Chamberlain, in order to contain Hitler, to enter into negotiations with Britain's European allies, including the Soviet Union. Our sources said that the British

the government was obviously reluctant to the American initiative, so Roosevelt had to put pressure on the British to get them to still negotiate with the Soviets to develop military measures to resist Hitler.

Nevertheless, the speed with which the non-aggression pact was signed with Hitler amazed me: after all, only two days before it was signed, I received an order to look for possible ways for a peaceful settlement of our relations with Germany. We still continued to send our strategic proposals to Stanin and Moloty, and the treaty had already been signed: Stalin himself conducted the negotiations in the strictest secrecy.

I knew nothing about the protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, but in general such secret protocols are the most common thing in diplomatic relations involving particularly complex issues. On the eve of the war, the British government signed secret protocols with Poland - they dealt with the provision of military assistance to Poland in the event of a war with Germany. In 1993, for example, a German weekly published secret minutes and recordings of confidential conversations between Gorbachev and Chancellor Helmut Kohl on the eve of German reunification. And now, reading the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, I do not find anything secret in them. The directives based on the signed agreements were very clear and definite: they were known not only to intelligence leaders, but also to military leaders and diplomats. In fact, the famous map of the division of Poland, attached to the protocols on September 28, 1939, appeared on the pages of Pravda, of course, without the signatures of Stalin and Ribbentrop, and the whole world could see it. By that time, however, Poland was occupied.

In October 1939, together with Fitin, the head of intelligence, and Merkulov, Beria's deputy, I took part in a meeting with Molotov in his Kremlin office. There were also the Chief of the Operational Simplification of the General Staff, Major General Vasilevsky (in the 1950s, Minister of Defense), Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Potemkin, Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission Borisov, Chief of Staff of the Navy Admiral Isakov, Chief of the Border Troops General Maslennikov and Chief of Military Intelligence, I think Major General Panfilov.

- There was one issue on the agenda - the protection of strategic interests in the Baltics. Molotov wanted to hear our thoughts. Soviet troops were already there in accordance with treaties signed with the governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Opening the meeting, Molotov said:

- We have an agreement with Germany that the Baltic is considered as a region of the most important interests of the Soviet Union. It is clear, however, continued Molotov, that although the German authorities recognize this in principle, they will never agree to any "cardinal social transformations" that would change the status of these states, their entry into the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Soviet leadership believes that the best way to protect the interests of the USSR in the Baltics and create a reliable border there is to help the labor movement to overthrow the puppet regimes.

From this statement it became clear exactly how we interpreted the terms of the agreement with Hitler. However, in the late autumn of 1939, a new impetus appeared to intensify our political, economic, military and intelligence operations in the Baltic. From our stations in Sweden and Berlin, we have received verified and reliable information that the Germans are planning to send high-level economic delegations to Riga and Tallinn to conclude long-term agreements. Thus, the Baltic states would be under the political and economic umbrella of Germany. Telegrams from Berlin and Sweden were sent with two signatures of the ambassador and the resident, which was extremely rare and meant that the information was of great political importance. Received in Moscow, they with visas of Molotov and Beria were forwarded to Fitin and me through the NKVD with the order of Beria to immediately submit proposals on this issue. Telegrams of this level, signed by ambassadors and residents, were usually sent to several members of the government.

Fitin introduced the telegram to Gukasov, the head of the department for work with nationalist and émigré organizations in the areas adjacent to our borders. By the way, it was Gukasov who a year ago demanded that the party bureau investigate my personal case. Now, still suspicious of my loyalty and, perhaps, still holding a grudge against me, he did not convey Beria's instructions to me and independently prepared proposals for confronting the German special services in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and bypassing me sent them to Fitin. His plan was to use only an agent network in the three Baltic republics, consisting of Russian and Jewish emigrants.

A scandal erupted.

Having summoned Fitin and me, and after listening to Fitin's report on Gukasov's note, Beria asked my opinion. I honestly answered that I did not have it, I would not receive any instructions and I was not aware of the German intentions in Riga; I'm currently doing completely different things. Beria exploded with rage and ordered the telegrams to be urgently brought again. Then he saw that they did not have my signature, and we had an obligatory rule to endorse any secret document that passed through the hands of one or another intelligence official and sent for processing. Gukasov was immediately called to the carpet - and Beria threatened to cut off his head for not following his order. Gukasov in response, lowering his voice, in a confidential tone (he was a native of Tbilisi) said literally the following. Indeed, he did not show me the telegrams, as he received information from the head of the investigative unit, Sergienko, about the presence of materials that speak of my suspicious contacts with the enemies of the people, the former intelligence leadership. Beria abruptly interrupted Gukasov: we must give up the idiotic habit of interfering with our proposals and once and for all cut ourselves on the nose that orders must be carried out unquestioningly and

immediately.

Europe is now in the fire of war, and the tasks of distributing in the current conditions, Beria emphasized, have become completely different. - And then he quoted Stalin, who demanded the active involvement of intelligence officers in political probing operations using any conflicts in the ruling circles of foreign states.

"This," Beria summed up, "is the key to success in overthrowing the current governments of puppet states that declared their so-called independence in 1918 under the protection of German bayonets. - From this tirade, we immediately understood that he meant the Baltic states. "The Germans before and now," continued Beria, "consider them as their provinces, considering them colonies of the German Empire. Our task is to play on the contradictions between England and Sweden in this region. At these words, he turned towards me. "Think everything over and call Chichaev to Moscow immediately. Then report your considerations, taking into account the necessary material resources. The term is three days.

The self-confident, bold presentation of the question reflected the new thinking that Stalin, Molotov and Beria demonstrated after the signing of the pact, which clearly gave them confidence in their own abilities. In the regions that have now officially entered the sphere of our interests, we began a radically new active policy in order to influence the internal course of the governments of these states.

Arriving in Moscow, Chichaev, the NKVD resident in Riga, reported sharp differences and strained relations within the Latvian government - primarily between President Ulmanis and Minister of War Balodis. This conflict undermined the stability of the existing regime, which was already under double pressure - ours and the Germans. The Germans, quite naturally, relied on their loyal supporters in economic management structures and business circles, while we counted on influence among groups on the left, connected both with the Communist Party and with trade unions. Be that as it may, Latvia, as well as other Baltic states, was essentially a buffer zone between us and Germany. Plan to create a broad

coalition, when both German and Soviet interests should be represented in the government, was also discussed at a meeting in Molotov's Kremlin office. Upon learning of such version, President Latojs and Ulmanis strongly opposed the idea, while Foreign Minister Wilhelm Munters unexpectedly approved the idea. The situation in the republic was tense also because the strike movement supported by us was also expanding there. The economic crisis caused by the outbreak of war also deepened: the region's traditional trade ties with Britain and Western Europe were cut off.

Chichayev and Vetrov, an adviser to our embassy in Riga, came to me, and Vetrov offered to play on the personal ambitions of Munters, whose reputation in Berlin was quite stable due to his frequent meetings with Ribbentrop. As for Ulmanis, his government was not particularly popular as a result of mistakes in the economic field, on the one hand, and the conciliatory position taken by him in relation to the chauvinistic German businessmen in Riga, on the other. These merchants bought up all the most valuable that was in the republic, widely using the advantages that opened up to them due to the termination of Latvia's trade ties with Western Europe. By the way, about seventy percent of all Latvian exports went to Germany - essentially at dumping prices. I informed Beria and Molotov that the government of Latvia relies not so much on the support of regular military formations as on auxiliary police units, composed mainly of the sons of farmers and small merchants.

In our opinion, Foreign Minister Munters was the ideal figure to lead a government acceptable to both German and Soviet interests. When he ordered the leading Latvian newspapers to publish a photo of Molotov (in honor of his 50th birthday), we took this as a sign of his willingness to establish personal contacts with Molotov. Our reaction was immediate: I was immediately issued a diplomatic passport in the name of Matveev, and Munters was informed that Matveev, Molotov's special adviser, would like to meet with him so that the Latvian minister could convey through him everything important that he could be outside the protocol. These unofficial messages will then be delivered to the Soviet leadership. It was June 1940 - and it was necessary to act urgently. That is why I did not get to Riga by train, but on board a high-speed Soviet bomber. In Riga, together with Vetrov, I paid a secret visit to Munters, expressing during our meeting the desire of the Soviet government to reshuffle the cabinet of ministers of the republic as soon as possible so that he, Munters, could head the new coalition government.

My visit was part of a complex operation to seize control of the Latvian government. It was led by Merkulov, Beria's first deputy, who had flown secretly to Riga before me to coordinate the action plan on the spot. While in Riga disguised as an adviser to Molotov, I reported everything to Merkulov, who had direct telephone access to Molotov and Beria. Meanwhile, an ultimatum was presented to the government in Riga. As a result, President Ulmanis was forced to leave his post, our troops occupied Latvia and the ex-president was arrested. The situation has changed the rules of the game. The Germans were too deeply involved in military operations in the West to be interested in the events taking place in Latvia. In this regard, Molotov and Stalin decided to put the wrong people at the head of the Baltic states, who would suit both sides (as, for example, the same Munters), but reliable people close to the Communist Party. True, some of the original conditions that implied the creation of coalition governments still remained. So, let's say, the Latvian and Estonian generals were given ranks similar to the ranks in the Red Army, and although Munters was arrested, they did not do it right away.

Together with Vetrov, I went to the residence of Munters, where we took all measures to pack his property and quietly take all family members to

Moscow. From there they were transported to Voronezh, where Munters was appointed to the position of professor at Voronezh University. We have officially notified the German side that we still consider Munters a politically significant figure. Under our control, he met in Moscow at dinner with German diplomatic representatives, but his fate was already sealed, and he did not even succeed in becoming a puppet head of government. In 1941, when the war with Germany began, Munters was arrested and sentenced to a long prison term for activities hostile to the Soviet government. By a strange coincidence, I met Munters in the Vladimir prison at the end of 1958 or the beginning of 1959. When he was released, he remained to live in Vladimir. After retiring, he published articles in Izvestia, proving the inevitability of the union of Latvia with the USSR.

The fate of the Baltic states, which was originally determined in the Kremlin and in Berlin, is in many ways similar to the fate of the Eastern European states, which was decided at one time in Yalta. The similarity here is striking: in both cases, the preliminary agreement provided for the creation of coalition governments friendly to both sides. We needed a buffer zone separating us from the spheres of influence of other world powers, and we were ready to go for a tough confrontation in those areas where the Red Army troops were located by the end of the war. Again, the Kremlin saw the task of building communism mainly in strengthening the might of the Soviet state in every possible way. We could play the role of a world power only if the state possessed sufficient military force and was able to subjugate the countries located near our borders to its influence. The idea of propaganda from above for a communist revolution around the world was an ideological smokescreen designed to establish the USSR as a superpower that influences all events in the world. Although initially this concept was ideological, it gradually became a real political course. Such an opportunity opened up before our state for the first time after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. After all, from now on, as the secret protocols confirmed, one of the leading powers of the world recognized the international interests of the Soviet Union and its natural desire to expand its borders.

After the story with Gukasov, which I told about, but even before Latvia was occupied by our troops, Beria unexpectedly called me to his place and offered to accompany him to a football match at the Dynamo stadium. He did not give any explanation - it was an order. Spartak, a team of trade unions, and Dynamo, a team of the NKVD, played: in those years, each meeting of these teams was an event in itself. At first, I decided that Beria wanted me to be present during his conversation with the agent in the restaurant. The restaurant was located at the stadium and was an ideal place for meetings with agents, since the offices there were equipped with listening devices. When we arrived at the stadium and got out of the car, I followed Beria at a respectful distance, since Kobulov, Tsanova, Maslennikov and other deputies immediately approached him, immediately surrounding their boss. Turning around, however, he made me a sign to come closer and walk side by side - so I found myself in the government box. Beria introduced me to Malenkov and other party and government officials. I must say that I felt extremely uncomfortable. All this time I sat in silence, but the very fact of my presence on the government podium made it clear to Kruglov, Serov, Tsanova and others that it was time to stop spreading rumors about my suspicious contacts, connections and about some materials compromising me that were available in the investigative unit. They had to make sure that from now on I belong to the category of trusted people in the eyes of the country's leadership.

I was lucky that all my meetings with Beria - both in his apartment and in the country - invariably had a purely business character. This even applies when I was with him at the wedding of his protégé Vardo Maksimalishvili, an attractive Georgian woman who was trained in the basics of intelligence by my wife. There were rumors that she would become Beria's mistress while still in Tbilisi, as a student.

Faculty of Medicine, and after moving to the capital, he took her to work in his secretariat, then arranged for her to marry an ordinary employee of the NKVD, also a Georgian. I was invited to the wedding to take a closer look at her and her husband and evaluate their demeanor (for example, whether they drink too much). Such a need was caused by the fact that the newlyweds were going to be sent to Paris to work in the local community of Georgian emigrants.

After one or two years of work in Paris, Vardo returned to Moscow, where she served in intelligence until 1952. In 1952, she was arrested, accusing that, while in Paris, she participated in a conspiracy against the Soviet state, prepared by Georgian emigrants, under the leadership of an influential anti-Soviet Mingrelian organization - here Beria, who was a Mingrelian, was clearly meant. She was thrown into prison on a direct order from Stalin, and she remained there until his death in 1953. She was immediately released by order of Beria, but after his overthrow, she was again arrested and kept in prison for two years. After leaving prison, she returned to her former medical profession. One more must be added to the list of troubles that have befallen her head. In 1939 or 1940, the Moscow City Council issued a warrant to her and her husband for an apartment that previously belonged to our famous theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold, who was repressed on Stalin's orders. By the way, this apartment was used by the NKVD as a safe house. During the new de-Stalinization campaign under Gorbachev, they began to put pressure on Vardo in every possible way, demanding that she vacate the apartment. It was very difficult for the Moscow City Council to legally evict her, since she had documents confirming that Vardo herself was a victim of political repression. After a story about the situation with Meyerhold's apartment was shown on television, however, without indicating the name of Vardo, this case began to gain publicity. Then the KGB, wanting to avoid a high-profile scandal, managed to find an equivalent living space for her and her family.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had another consequence for us - the annexation of Western Ukraine. After the occupation of Poland by German troops, our army occupied Galicia and Eastern Poland. Galicia has always been a stronghold of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, supported by such leaders as Hitler and Canaris in Germany, Beneš in Czechoslovakia, and Austrian Federal Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss. The capital of Galicia, Lvov, became the center where refugees from Poland fled from the German occupation troops flocked. Polish intelligence and counterintelligence sent to Lvov all their most important prisoners - those who were suspected of playing a double game during the German-Polish confrontation in the 1930s. I learned about what was going on in Galicia only in October 1939, when the Red Army occupied Lvov. The first secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Khrushchev, and his People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Serov, went there to carry out a campaign of Sovietization of Western Ukraine on the spot. My wife was sent to Lvov together with Pavel Zhuravlev, head of the German branch of our intelligence. I was worried: her unit dealt with German agents and underground organizations of Ukrainian nationalists, and in Lvov the atmosphere was strikingly different from the state of affairs in the Soviet part of Ukraine.

In Lvov, the Western capitalist way of life flourished: wholesale and retail trade was in the hands of private traders, who were soon to be liquidated during the Sovietization. The Ukrainian Uniate Church enjoyed great influence, the local population supported the organization of Ukrainian nationalists, headed by Bandera's people. According to our information, the OUN acted very actively and had significant forces at its disposal. In addition, she had rich experience in underground activities, which, alas, Serov's "team" did not have. The counterintelligence service of Ukrainian nationalists was able to quite quickly track down some safe houses of the NKVD in Lvov. The method of their surveillance was extremely simple: they started it near the building of the city department of the NKVD and accompanied everyone who came out of there in civilian clothes and ... in boots, which betrayed him as a military man: Ukrainian Chekists, hiding their uniforms under their coats, forgot such

"a trifle" like shoes. They apparently did not take into account that in Western Ukraine only the military wore boots. However, how could they know about this, when in the Soviet part of Ukraine everyone wore boots, since it was simply impossible to get other shoes.

The failure of the safe houses was reported to the Center, and my wife moved to the Tsentralnaya Hotel, first under the guise of a refugee from Warsaw, and then posing as a journalist from Izvestia. She made extensive use of her experience of working with Polish refugees in Belarus in the 1920s. She spoke Polish fluently, and soon she managed to establish friendly relations with a family of Polish Jews from Warsaw. She helped them to leave for Moscow, where we met them, gave them money and sent them to the USA to their relatives. We agreed that "friendly relations" would be continued, which meant that, if necessary, the Soviet intelligence service would be able to count on them. They did not know that my wife was an operative and agreed to further communication. Later, after my arrest, a tourist from the USA, one of the relatives of this family, arrived in Moscow in 1960, and tried to find my wife at the Izvestia publishing house, where, as Emma once said, she works as a translator. They met very cordially, but this man was not developed for intelligence purposes.

Serov and Khrushchev ignored Zhuravlev's warnings that local Ukrainian leaders and cultural figures should be treated with the utmost patience. Many of them were quite widely known in Prague, Vienna and Berlin. Thus, Serov arrested Kost-Levitsky, who at one time was the head of the former independent Ukrainian People's Republic. Khrushchev immediately reported this arrest to Stalin, emphasizing his merit in neutralizing the potential prime minister of the Ukrainian government in exile. Kost-Levitsky was transferred from Lvov to Moscow and imprisoned. By that time he was already over eighty, and the arrest of this old man greatly damaged our prestige in the eyes of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact put an end to the plans of Ukrainian nationalists to create an independent republic of Carpatho-Ukraine, plans actively supported in 1938 by England and France. This idea was torpedoed by Benes, who agreed with Stalin that the Carpathian Ukraine, which also included part of the territory that belonged to Czechoslovakia, would be completely transferred to the Soviet Union. Konovalts, the only Ukrainian leader with access to Hitler and Goering, was reportedly liquidated in 1938 (he had once served as a colonel in the Austrian army and enjoyed some respect in German "Nazi" circles). Other nationalist leaders in Ukraine did not have high ties to the Germans - they were mostly Abwehr or Gestapo operatives, and the British or French authorities did not attach any serious importance to these people and did not stake on them when the war broke out. Therefore, Khrushchev's claims that he allegedly thwarted Western plans for the creation of a Ukrainian interim government in exile by arresting Kost-Levitsky simply did not correspond to reality, and when I was ordered to assess how important the detention of Kost-Levitsky in Moscow was, I in my report Beria, who was then sent to Molotov, stressed that this detention was not justified from any point of view. On the contrary, a special status should be granted to Galicia in order to neutralize the widespread anti-Soviet propaganda, and Kost-Levitsky should be immediately released, apologized to him and sent back safe and sound, making it possible to live in Lvov with maximum comfort. This should be done, of course, on the condition that he, in turn, support our idea of sending an influential and representative delegation from Western Ukraine to Kiev and Moscow to negotiate a special status for Galicia within the Soviet republic of Ukraine. Thus, due respect would be given to local traditions. Molotov agreed. Kost-Levitsky was released and went back to Lvov in

separate special wagon.

This proposal was my first open confrontation with Khrushchev and Serov.

In accordance with the secret protocol between Molotov and Ribbentrop, the USSR was not supposed to prevent German citizens and persons of German nationality living in territories within the sphere of our interests, to move at their request to Germany or to territories that were part of the sphere of German interests. We decided to take advantage of these conditions.

A group of Captain Adamovich was sent to Chernivtsi. In my opinion, it included William Fischer, who had just been brought back to work after being fired in 1938 for his connection with the defector Orlov. He later took the name Rudolf Abel. Chernivtsi is located near the border - between Bukovina (Galicia), on the one hand, and the Polish territory, at that time occupied by the Germans, on the other. The group was to establish contacts with agents recruited by us from among ethnic Germans, Poles and Ukrainians. They had to settle in these places as refugees from the communist regime, seeking protection in the territories controlled by the Germans. Captain Adamovich left Moscow for Chernovtsy, taking with him photographs of our agents in Poland and Germany, which he had to show to four agents who were to recognize these people at pre-arranged rendezvous in Warsaw, Danzig (Gdansk), Berlin and Krakow. The photographs showed our employees operating under the cover of diplomatic services, trade missions or journalistic activities in these cities. Fisher's (Abel's) task was to teach four agents the basics of radio communications.

However, after Adamovich was received by Serov, possibly in Chernivtsi, and agreed on the material and technical base necessary for the training of agents, he suddenly disappeared. Not finding him, Serov scolded Fischer and reported the disappearance of Adamovich to Khrushchev. Fischer, although he was an employee of the group, was not aware of bureaucratic intrigues and believed that if he reported Adamovich's two-day absence to the head of the local NKVD, then he did not need to report to me in Moscow either. You can imagine my state when I was summoned to Beria's office, who ordered me to report on how Adamovich's operation was going. He was furious when I couldn't provide anything new, except for information from a week ago.

The phone rang. It was Khrushchev. He began to indignantly reproach Beria with the fact that incompetent people and traitors were sent to him in Ukraine, interfering in the work of the Ukrainian NKVD. According to him, local personnel are able to carry out all the necessary work themselves.

"That Adamovich of yours is a scoundrel!" he shouted into the phone. - He, according to our information, fled to the Germans.

The government line made it possible for me to hear his angry words. Beria obviously did not want to answer in my presence in the same rude manner, and he

Opportunity said softly:

- Nikita Sergeevich, here I have Major Sudoplatov, deputy head of our intelligence. He is personally responsible for Adamovich's operation. For any of your questions, you can get an answer from him.

Picking up the phone, I began to explain that Adamowicz is a competent worker and knows Poland well. But Khrushchev did not listen to my explanations and cut me off. He was convinced that Adamovich was with the Germans and should be immediately found or stolen. He went on to say that he would ruin my career if I continued to persist in covering up bandits and scoundrels like Kost-Levitsky and Adamovich. In his hearts he hung up the phone without waiting
my answer.

Beria's reaction was reservedly official.

"In two days," he rapped out, "Adamovich must be found, dead or alive. If he is alive, he should be immediately delivered to Moscow. In case of failure to comply with the instructions of a member of the Politburo, you will bear full responsibility for the consequences, taking into account your past connections with the enemies of the people in the former leadership of the intelligence agencies.

I left the office with a heavy feeling. Ten minutes later my phone started

ringing incessantly. Counterintelligence, border guards, heads of regional departments of the Ukrainian and Belarusian NKVD ... - everyone demanded a photograph of Adamovich. On the personal instructions of Beria, an all-Union search began. Two days passed, but no trace of Adamovich could be found. I knew that I was in big trouble. At the last moment, however, I decided to call Adamovich's wife, who lived in Moscow. According to the information I had, nothing suspicious had been noticed in her behavior in recent days. As if by the way, I inquired when she last spoke to her husband. To my surprise, she thanked me for this call and said that her husband had been at home for the last two days - he had a concussion and doctors from the NKVD polyclinic forbade him to get out of bed for at least a few days. I immediately called General Novikov, the head of the medical service of the NKVD, and he confirmed that everything was as it should be.

actually exist.

Do I need to describe the relief I experienced? Reporting to Beria as usual at the end of the day, I said that Adamovich was in Moscow.

- Under arrest? Beria asked.

"No," I replied, and began to explain the situation.

We were alone in the office. He rudely cut me off, using words that I did not expect from a member of the Politburo. Enraged, he described circles around his huge office, shouting curses at me and Adamovich, calling us blockheads, irresponsible suckers, compromising the NKVD in the eyes of the party leadership.

- Why are you silent? he stared at me, suddenly breaking off his tirade.

I replied that I had a terrible headache.

"Then immediately, now," Beria threw in, "go home."

Before I left, I filled out an arrest warrant for Adamovich and went to see Merkulov, who was supposed to sign it. However, when I explained to him what the matter was, he laughed in my face and tore the paper in front of my eyes. At this point, the headache became unbearable, and the medical officer took me home. The next morning, Beria's secretary called, he was extremely brief and businesslike - the people's commissar ordered to stay at home for three days and be treated, adding that the owner was sending me lemons received from Georgia. The investigation showed that Adamovich, having got drunk in a restaurant at the railway station in Chernivtsi, got into a fight in the toilet room and received a strong blow to the head, which caused a concussion. In this state, he managed to board the Moscow train, forgetting to inform Fischer (Abel) of his departure. During the fight, the photos he was supposed to show to our four agents were lost. Later, however, they were discovered at the station by Ukrainian NKVD officers, who believed that Abwehr agents had deliberately started the fight in an attempt to kidnap Adamovich. The case ended with the fact that Adamovich was fired from the NKVD and appointed first as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, and then as a minister. I saw him one more time at the theatrical premiere in Moscow in the early 50s, but we didn't say hello to each other.

Unfortunately, my conflict with Serov and Khrushchev did not end there. Serov was involved in a love story with the famous Polish opera singer Bandrowska-Turska. In Moscow, he announced that he had personally recruited her. Everyone was delighted - after all, the singer enjoyed European fame and often toured Moscow and other European capitals before the war. Euphoria, however, soon passed with the consent of Serov, she left for Romania, where she flatly refused to meet with our resident in Bucharest - embassy adviser. Both Khrushchev and Beria then received a letter from the Ukrainian NKVD, who accused Serov of inciting tricks under the guise of fulfilling his operational duties.

Serov was urgently summoned to Moscow. I happened to be in Beria's office at the moment when he invited Serov to explain his actions and answer the accusations against him. Serov said that he had received permission from Khrushchev himself to have an affair with Bandrowska-Tursk,

and it was driven by operational requirements. Beria allowed him to call Khrushchev from his office, but as soon as he heard where Serov was calling from, he immediately began to swear:

"You son of a bitch," he shouted into the phone, "wanted to drag me into your love tricks to get away? Pass the phone to Comrade Beria!

I could hear Khrushchev addressing Beria with the words:

- Lavrenty Pavlovich! Do whatever you want with this yellow-mouthed chick fresh out of the military academy. He has no experience in serious cases. If you think it possible, leave it at the same job. No, punish them properly. Just don't involve me in this business and in your games with Ukrainian emigrants.

Beria began to scold Serov how much in vain, threatening to dismiss him from the organs in disgrace, calling him a petty womanizer, insulting and humiliating him in every possible way. Frankly, I was extremely embarrassed to be in the office during this angry tirade. Then Beria unexpectedly invited Serov to discuss with me how to get out of this unpleasant story. We have come to the conclusion that Serov should not make any attempt to contact Bandrovskaya-Turskaya, whether on operational or any other grounds. Her departure to Romania was a very unfortunate fact, since the singer's performances in Lvov or Moscow could have made a favorable impression on public opinion in Poland and Western Europe. At the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, it was important to demonstrate that the situation in Galicia was normal and that the situation was quite healthy. In this regard, the singer's flight to Romania was a blow to Khrushchev's reputation, who never ceased to assert that Moscow had nothing to worry about, since the Sovietization of Western Ukraine was proceeding satisfactorily, as evidenced, they say, by the support given to this process by prominent figures of Ukrainian and Polish culture.

Khrushchev's prestige suffered in other incidents as well. For example, in 1939, one of the commanders of the ranks of their partisan formations, Captain Prokopyuk, returned from Spain. An experienced operative, he was quite suitable for appointment to the post of head of the Ukrainian NKVD department, whose task was to train employees to conduct partisan operations in the event of a war with Poland or Germany. Hearing about our proposal, Khrushchev immediately called Beria with strong objections. Beria summoned his deputy for personnel Kruglov and me, since it was I who signed the submission to Prokopyuk. Khrushchev's objections were caused, as it turned out, by the fact that in 1938 Prokopyuk's brother, a member of the board of the People's Commissariat of Education of Ukraine, was shot as a "Polish spy." Khrushchev heard Beria scolding Kruglov and me for sending a person to Kyiv, albeit professionally and competent, but not acceptable to the local party leadership.

Here I would like to talk about who Khrushchev considered "acceptable." Ego Uspensky, whom Khrushchev had previously taken with him to Ukraine as head of the NKVD. In Moscow, he headed the NKVD department for the city and region and worked directly under Khrushchev. In Ukraine, Uspensky carried out repressions in 1938, as a result of which, out of the members of the old composition of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine - more than 100 people - only three were not arrested.

Uspensky, as soon as he arrived in Kyiv, summoned the staff of the apparatus and declared that he would not allow liberalism, softness and long arguments, as in a synagogue. Those who do not want to work with him can apply. By the way, some of the wife's friends did just that, taking advantage of this offer. In the presence of a large audience, Uspensky signed their applications for transfer to the reserve or appointment with a demotion - outside Ukraine. Uspensky is responsible for mass torture and repression, and as for Khrushchev, he was one of the few members of the Politburo who personally participated with Uspensky in the interrogations of those arrested.

During the repressions of 1938, when Yezhov lost Stalin's confidence and the hunt for Chekists - "traitors" began, Uspensky tried to flee abroad. He took with him

several clean passports and fled, staging suicide, but the body of the "drowned man" was not found. Khrushchev panicked and turned to Stalin and Beria with a request to declare a search for Ouspensky. The search was very intensive, and soon we realized that Ouspensky's wife knew that he had not drowned, but was hiding somewhere. She did not directly betray him by her behavior, but it became clear to us. In the end, he himself surrendered in Siberia after he noticed a surveillance team in Omsk.

Since then, as soon as it came to the use of any of the officers of the Ukrainian NKVD, our leadership immediately referred to the Uspensky case, recalling the words spoken in this regard by Khrushchev:

- None of the Chekists who worked with him can be trusted.

Meanwhile, during the interrogation, Uspensky testified that he and Khrushchev were close, were friends at home, and tried in every possible way to convince everyone that he was just an obedient soldier of the party. Ouspensky's behavior played a fatal role in the fate of his wife - she was arrested three days after he surrendered to the authorities. Sentenced to death for helping her husband escape, she petitioned for clemency, and then, as Kruglov told me, Khrushchev intervened: he recommended that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet reject her request for clemency.

This story made a strong impression on me. Kruglov, who was well acquainted with the work of the Central Committee (before the NKVD, he worked in the apparatus of the Central Committee), confirmed that members of the Politburo could personally interfere in deciding the fate of people, especially members of the families of enemies of the people. I learned for the first time that the intervention in these cases is not intended to save the lives of innocent people, but is a way of getting rid of unwanted bystanders. In the archives, in the list of wives of prominent figures in the party, the Red Army and the NKVD who were sentenced to death, I also found the name of Uspensky's wife. Her death sentence, like the sentences of other wives of repressed leaders, was first approved by the highest party authorities.

After my appointment as deputy head of the intelligence service in March 1939, I reminded Beria of the fate of Zubov, who was still in prison for failing to comply with an order to finance a coup in Yugoslavia. This man, I told Beria, is a dedicated and experienced intelligence officer. Beria, who had known Zubov for seventeen years, pretended not to have heard anything, although it was Zubov who played a significant role in the fact that Beria was able to reach the heights of power. In 1922, Zubov headed the intelligence department that monitored the secret connections of the Georgian Mensheviks and their agents in Turkey. Based on the Zubov information, Beria reported to Dzerzhinsky and Lenin about the impending uprising and about the successful suppression of it in the bud. This report was discussed at the plenum of the Central Committee of the party and actually served as the basis for the appointment of Beria to the post of head of the Transcaucasian GPU. Zubov remained on friendly terms both with Beria himself and with his deputy Bogdan Kobulov: coming to Moscow from Georgia, Kobulov invariably stayed at Zubov's apartment.

In the autumn of 1939, after the capture of Poland by the Germans, Colonel Stanisław Sosnowski, the former head of the Polish secret service in Berlin, and Prince Janusz Radziwiłł, a wealthy Polish aristocrat with considerable political weight, fell into our hands. Both were placed in the Lubyanka for active development as our agents.

For the sake of saving Zubov, I suggested to Beria that he be placed in the same cell with Colonel Sosnovsky. Zubov spoke French, German and Georgian fluently. Beria agreed, and Zubov was transferred from Lefortovo, where he was mercilessly beaten on the orders of the same Kobulov, who once, coming from Georgia, stayed at his house. His tormentor was the infamous Rhodes, who tried to force a confession through inhuman torture: Zubov's knees were crushed. As a result, Zubov became disabled, but he never went to self-incrimination.

The head of the investigative unit, Sergienko, objected to the transfer of Zubov from Lefortovo to Lubyanka, although I explained to him that my interest in Zubov and his fate was caused purely

operational considerations and agreed with Beria. In response to this, Sergienko, refusing to translate Zubov, said:

- I will personally report this case to the Commissar. Trash Teeth refuses admit your guilt for not following the direct order of the leadership!

In turn, I reported to Beria that Sergienko was refusing to carry out the order given to him. Beria immediately picked up the phone, called Sergienko and began to scold him, in the end he said that if in fifteen minutes he did not fulfill his order, he would not be blown off his head. Sergienko tried to object, but Beria did not listen to his explanations.

Beria was often very rude in dealing with high-ranking officials, but as a rule, he spoke politely with ordinary employees. Later, I had to make sure that the leaders of that time allowed themselves to be rude only in relation to the leadership, and the members of the Politburo behaved emphatically with ordinary people.

politely.

Zubov, being in the same cell with Sosnovsky, contributed to his recruitment. He convinced him that cooperation with the German or Polish intelligence services did not promise him any prospects for the future, therefore it makes direct sense to cooperate with Russian intelligence. In the 1930s, Sosnowski, being a Polish resident in Berlin, led a very effective network of agents. He acted under the guise of a Polish aristocrat, kept a stable. His agents, mostly attractive young women, he usually installed in the headquarters of the Nazi Party and the secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1935, the Gestapo managed to expose most of his agents, and Sosnovsky himself was arrested for espionage. He showed the investigators at the Lubyanka that the exposed agents were executed in the Plötzensee prison right in front of his eyes. The Poles exchanged him for the head of the German community in Poland, accused of spying for Germany.

In 1937, Sosnowski was convicted by a military court in Warsaw of embezzlement of funds allocated for agents, and he served time in Eastern Poland. Two years later, units of the Red Army released the prisoners from prisons. As for Sosnovsky, he was "transferred" from a Polish prison to an NKVD prison.

We received information from Sosnovsky that two of his agents were still active. In addition, he suggested the idea of using the connections of Prince Radziwill and making him an intermediary between our leadership and Hermann Goering, one of Hitler's deputies. Sosnovsky agreed to cooperate with us after we presented him with the information we had about his intelligence network in Berlin, and when he realized that we knew everything about his past. This was a man who knew too much, and it would simply be unwise to let him slip away and not get him to work for us. Control over him helped us to use two of his important sources of information located in Germany - they were useful to us in 1940 and in the first two years of the war.

After Zubov was able to assess Sosnovsky's potential for our intelligence and helped recruit him, I suggested using Zubov as a cellmate of Prince Radziwill. Beria agreed with my proposal. Zubov was transferred to Radziwill's cell and stayed there for a month. By this time, the conditions of Zubov's detention had changed: he was allowed to have lunch and dinner in my office, and we ordered food in our restaurant. While still in custody, he, accompanied by an escort, went to the NKVD polyclinic for medical procedures. In the end, he was released in 1941 shortly after the start of the war, and I took him to my staff as the head of the department. He worked in the authorities until the very end of the war, but in 1946, when Abakumov became the Minister of State Security, Zubov had to urgently resign. At one time, it was Abakumov who was involved in the Zubov case and gave orders to severely beat him.

Beria personally dealt with Prince Radziwill. He managed to convince Radziwill that he

should act as an intermediary between the Soviet government and Goering to clarify delicate issues in the relationship between the two countries. We kept Radziwill in sight since the mid-30s and knew that the prince received Goering on his estate near Vilnius, where he liked to hunt (later this part of the territory went to Lithuania, and at that time belonged to Poland). By the way, in his memoirs, Radziwill recalls meetings with Beria, who, when parting with him, once said: "We will always need people like you, prince."

Representatives of the noble aristocratic families of Great Britain, Italy and Sweden petitioned for the release of Radziwill. In 1940, after Beria recruited him as our agent of influence, I arranged for Radziwill to leave for Berlin. From Berlin, we received information about him from our residency: he was often seen at diplomatic receptions in Goering's society. In the same year, I was ordered to develop options for contacting him through our agent. In this case, we decided to contact the prince through open channels, since he was a prominent figure in society and could freely visit the Soviet embassy without arousing suspicion. He, in particular, could be interested in the fate of family property that ended up in the occupied territory.

In 1940, Radziwill was received twice by our resident in Berlin, Amayak Kobulov, who reported on these meetings to the Center. However, Kobulov was not given any instructions on the operational use of the Polish prince in contacts with the Germans. We did not have much faith in Radziwill's sincerity and therefore decided not to contact him, especially since his political contacts did not promise us any immediate benefit. Before Germany launched a war against us, in fact, there were no such problems where it could be used to probe the position of the Germans on this or that delicate issue: after all, all this time, Molotov and our ambassador Dekanozov maintained confidential relations with Ribbentrop and the German ambassador Schulenburg.

It was known that Radziwill had no access to strategic military information. Our decision was to show the maximum patience and just wait until Radziwill goes to Switzerland or Sweden, where he will be out of German control, and only there to get in touch with him. As far as I know, he never went there. After Hitler's attack on the USSR, Radziwill seemed to go into the shadows, but, according to our information, he remained in Germany and came to Poland, enjoying life as much as possible. In 1942, for some time, his traces were lost. Looking back, I see that we clearly overestimated both Radziwill's personal connections and his influence on Goering...

The famous actress Olga Chekhova, the ex-wife of the famous writer's nephew, was close to Radziwill and Goering, and through her relatives in Transcaucasia was connected with Beria. She maintains regular contacts with the NKVD. Initially, it was supposed to be used precisely for communication with Radziwill. We had a plan to assassinate Hitler, according to which Radziwill and Olga Chekhova, with the help of their friends among the German aristocracy, were to provide our people with access to Hitler. A group of agents abandoned in Germany and underground in Berlin was completely subordinate to the militant Igor Miklashevsky, who arrived in Germany at the beginning of 1942.

The former boxing champion Miklashevsky, acting as a Soviet defector, gained considerable popularity in Berlin after his fight with the German boxing champion Max Schmeling in 1942 or 1943, from which he emerged victorious. Miklashevsky remained in Berlin until 1944. Miklashevsky's uncle fled the Soviet Union at the beginning of the war and became one of the active members of the German anti-Bolshevik committee for the liberation of the USSR. He proudly received his nephew, giving him every support as a political opponent of the Soviet regime. In 1942, Miklashevsky managed to meet Olga Chekhova at one of the receptions. He conveyed to Moscow that it would be easy to remove Goering, but the Kremlin did not

showed particular interest in it. In 1943, Stalin abandoned his original plan to assassinate Hitler because he was afraid that once Hitler was eliminated, Nazi circles and the military would try to conclude a separate peace treaty with the Allies without the participation of the Soviet Union.

Such fears were not unfounded. We had information that in the summer of 1942 the representative of the Vatican in Ankara, at the initiative of Pope Pius XII, spoke with the German ambassador Franz von Papen, urging him to use his influence to sign a separate peace between Great Britain, the United States and Germany. In addition to this message from our station in Ankara, the Soviet station in Rome reported that the pope met with Myron Taylor, Roosevelt's envoy to the Vatican, to discuss the conversation of Cardinal Roncalli (later he became Pope John

XXIII) with von Papen. Such a separate agreement would also limit our influence in Europe, excluding the Soviet Union from the future European alliance. None of the Kremlin leaders wanted such an agreement to be concluded. Stalin ordered the liquidation of von Papen, since he was a key figure around whom the plans of the Americans and the British revolved to create an alternative government if a separate peace was signed. However, as I mentioned earlier, the attempt failed, as the Bulgarian militant detonated a grenade ahead of time and only lightly wounded von Papen.

We also had information, although not particularly detailed, about direct contacts Americans with von Papen in Istanbul.

Miklashevsky fled to France in 1944 after the liquidation of his uncle. In France, he remained for two years after the end of the war, tracking down the Vlasovites who had fled to the West - the remnants of the army of the traitor Lieutenant General Vlasov. In 1947, Miklashevsky returned to the Soviet Union, was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and resumed his boxing career, which he remained faithful to until entering the

pension.

A lot has been written about what kind of intelligence we had before the start of the Great Patriotic War, which testified to the inevitable German attack on our country. The position of Stalin, who calmly awaited the invasion instead of alerting troops in time, is often declared one of the reasons for the defeats and heavy losses that the Red Army suffered in 1941. Generally speaking, I agree that the country's leadership failed to correctly evaluate the information received through intelligence channels, but we must first deal with the question of what this information was.

NKVD intelligence had been reporting the threat of war since November 1940. By this time, Zhuravlev and Zoya Rybkina had started a letter file under the operational name "Zateya", where the most important reports about the German military threat were collected. This folder contained very disturbing documents that worried the Soviet leadership, since they called into question the sincerity of the proposals for dividing the world between Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy and Japan, made by Hitler to Molotov in Berlin in November 1940. Based on these materials, it was easier for us to track developments and report to the Soviet leadership on the main trends in German policy. Materials from the Zateya letter case were often reported to Stalin and Molotov, and they used our information both to cooperate with Hitler and to oppose him.

Although the intelligence received exposed Hitler's intentions to attack the Soviet Union, many reports contradicted each other. They lacked assessments of the German military potential: tank formations and aircraft located on our borders and capable of breaking through the line of defense of the Red Army units. No one in the state security service seriously studied the real balance of forces on the Soviet-German border. That is why the force of the Hitler strike was largely unexpected for our

military leaders, including Marshal Zhukov, then Chief of the General Staff. In his memoirs, he admits that he did not imagine an enemy capable of such large-scale offensive operations, with tank formations operating simultaneously in several directions.

What was missing from the intelligence was a qualitative assessment of the German "blitzkrieg" tactics. We knew from the German military-strategy games that a long war would require additional economic resources, and we believed that if the war did start, the Germans would first of all try to seize Ukraine and areas rich in raw materials to replenish food supplies. This was a big mistake: military intelligence and the NKVD failed to correctly inform the General Staff that the goal of the German army in Poland and France was not to seize land, but to break and destroy the enemy's combat power.

As soon as Stanin learned that the German General Staff was conducting exercises on operational-strategic and logistical supply in the event of a protracted war, he immediately gave the order to acquaint the German military attache in Moscow with the industrial and military power of Siberia. In April 1941, he was allowed to tour the new military factories that produced tanks of the latest designs and aircraft. Through our residency in Berlin, we spread rumors in the ministries of aviation and economics that the war with the Soviet Union would turn out to be a tragedy for the Nazi leadership, especially if the war turned out to be long and fought on two fronts.

On January 10, 1941, Molotov and the German ambassador to Moscow, Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg, signed a secret protocol on the settlement of territorial issues in Lithuania. Germany gave up its interests in some areas of Lithuania in exchange for seven and a half million US dollars in gold. At that time I did not know about the existence of this protocol. I was only briefly informed that we managed to reach an agreement with the Germans on territorial issues in the Baltic states and on economic cooperation for 1941.

Information about the date of the beginning of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union, which came to us, was the most controversial. From Great Britain and the United States, we received reports from reliable sources that the question of a German attack on the USSR depended on a secret agreement with the British government, since it would be too dangerous to wage a war on two fronts.

From our plenipotentiary in Washington, Umansky, and resident in New York, Ovakimyan, we received reports that British intelligence officer Montgomery Hyde, who worked for William Stevenson from the British Security Coordination Center in the Empire State Building, managed to plant a "canard" on the German embassy in Washington. The disinformation was excellent: if Hitler decides to attack England, the Russians will start a war against Hitler.

Analyzing the information received by the Union from the most reliable sources of military intelligence and the NKVD, you can clearly see that about half of the messages - until May and even June 1941 - confirmed: yes, war is inevitable. But the materials also showed that the clash with us depended on whether Germany would regulate her relations with England. Thus, Philby reported that the British Cabinet was developing plans to escalate tensions and military conflicts between Germany and the USSR in order to provoke Germany. In the "Black Bertha" file, there is a reference to information received from Philby or Cairncross that British agents are busy spreading rumors in the United States about the inevitability of war between Germany and the Soviet Union: we were supposed to start it, and the preemptive strike was going to inflict in southern Poland. The folder with these materials became more and more plump day by day. We have received new information about how the British side is inciting fear among the German top leaders in connection with the preparation of the Soviets for war. We also received information about the intensified contacts of the probing nature of the British

representatives with the Germans in search of a peaceful solution to the European military conflict.

Meanwhile, according to Beria, Stalin and Molotov decided at least to delay the military conflict and try to improve the situation by applying the plan that was abandoned in 1938. This plan provided for the overthrow of the Yugoslav government, which signed a cooperation agreement with Hitler. And in March 1941, military intelligence and the NKVD, through their residencies, actively supported the conspiracy against the pro-German government in Belgrade. Thus, Molotov and Stalin hoped to strengthen the strategic positions of the USSR in the Balkans. The new anti-German government, in their opinion, could delay the Italian and German operations in Greece.

Major General Milstein, deputy chief of military intelligence, was sent to Belgrade to assist in the military overthrow of the pro-German government. From our side, Alakhverdov participated in this action. By this time, with the help of the Foreign Ministry, in Moscow, we managed to recruit the Yugoslav ambassador to the Soviet Union, Gavrilovich. It was jointly developed by Fedotov, the head of counterintelligence, and myself. We had the impression, however, that he was playing a double game, as he contacted the British representatives in Moscow every week.

A week after the coup, we signed a mutual assistance pact with the new government in Belgrade. Hitler's reaction to this coup was swift and highly effective. On April 6, a day after the signing of the pact, Hitler invaded Yugoslavia - and two weeks later the Yugoslav army was defeated. Moreover, Bulgaria, through which the German troops passed, although it was in the zone of our interests, supported the Germans.

Hitler made it clear that he did not consider himself bound by official and confidential agreements - after all, the secret protocols of the Molotov Pact— Ribbentrop provided for preliminary consultations before taking any military steps. And although both sides were actively consulting on the division of spheres of influence from November 1940 to March 1941, an atmosphere of mutual distrust remained in their relations. Hitler was surprised by the events in Belgrade, and we, for our part, are no less surprised by his quick invasion of Yugoslavia.

I have to admit that we did not expect such a total and such a quick defeat of Yugoslavia. During all these events, on April 18, 1941, I signed a special directive in which all our residencies in Europe were ordered to intensify the work of the agent network and communication lines in every possible way, bringing them into line with wartime conditions.

Military intelligence sent a similar directive along its own lines. We also planned to send a group of experienced operatives to Switzerland, including the Bulgarian Afanasyev. They were supposed to be in contact with reliable sources using their cover in neutral Switzerland. With this country there was no direct connection, and our agents had to travel by train through Germany, with a change in Berlin. In this regard, it was decided to strengthen our residencies in Germany and Poland. We sent some operatives to Berlin, having transferred them from Italy and France. By this time, Belgium was already occupied. We did not always keep pace with steel due to the rapid development of events: we were unable to promptly deliver radio equipment, batteries, spare parts to our German agents, and, worse, these people were not sufficiently trained either in terms of the basics of intelligence work or in terms of mastering the art of radio communication .

Gradually, we began to pay more attention to political refugees who arrived in Moscow from countries occupied by the Germans. Prior to his flight to Britain, Beneš ordered the formation of the Czech Legion, which was sent to Poland under the command of the young Lieutenant Colonel Svoboda.

After preliminary contacts with our residency in Warsaw, Svoboda moved

with its part to Western Ukraine. In fact, after the disarmament of his legion, having received the status of an unofficial envoy, he lived in a safe house and at my dacha in the suburbs of Moscow. Maklyarsky maintained regular contact with him. We kept Freedom in reserve. In May and June, just before the start of the war, we began to discuss with him a plan for the formation of Czech units in the Soviet Union, in order to then throw them into the German rear to conduct partisan operations in Czechoslovakia. I remember this man very well - invariably polite and invariably self-possessed, bearing himself with great dignity.

Meanwhile, Stalin and Molotov ordered the redeployment of large army formations from Siberia to the borders with Germany. They arrived to protect the western borders during April, May and early June. In May, after the arrival of Eitingon and Caridad Mercader from China in Moscow, I signed a directive on the training of Russians and other national émigré groups in Europe to participate in intelligence operations in war conditions.

Today we know that secret consultations between Hitler, Ribbentrop and Molotov on a possible strategic agreement between Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union gave Stalin and Molotov the illusory idea that it was possible to negotiate with Hitler. Until the very last moment, they believed that their authority and military power, repeatedly demonstrated to German experts, would delay the war for at least a year while Hitler tried to peacefully settle his disputes with Britain. Stalin and Molotov were annoyed by other points of view that ran counter to their strategic plans to prevent a military conflict. This explains Stalin's rude remarks on Merkulov's report of June 16, 1941, which spoke of clear signs of an impending war. The fact that Stalin appointed himself head of government in May 1941 made it clear that he would lead the negotiations with Hitler and was confident that he could convince him not to go to war. The well-known TASS statement of June 14 confirmed that he was ready for negotiations and this time he would conduct them himself. Although large-scale preparations for war were in full swing in Germany, and for a long time, Stalin and Molotov believed that Hitler had not made a final decision to attack our country and that there were serious disagreements within the German military command on this issue. Curiously, the TASS statement came out on the same day that Hitler set the final date for the invasion. It should also be mentioned a few more little-known

moments.

In May 1941, a German Junkers-52 invaded Soviet airspace and, undetected, landed safely at the central airfield in Moscow near the Dynamo stadium. This caused a commotion in the Kremlin and led to a wave of repression among the military command: it began with layoffs, then followed by arrests and execution of the Air Force high command. This enchanting landing in the center of Moscow showed Hitler how weak the combat readiness of the Soviet armed forces was.

Second fact. Stalin's military leadership and entourage nourished the illusion that the power of the Red Army was equal to the power of the Wehrmacht forces concentrated on our western borders. Why such a miscalculation? First, universal conscription was introduced only in 1939, and although

The Red Army tripled its strength, it lacked people with a higher military education, since more than thirty thousand regular commanders were repressed in the 30s. The number of military schools and schools opened in 1939, although impressive, was not enough. True, half of the repressed top army officials were returned from prisons and Gulag camps to the army, but they were clearly not enough to cope with the training of the entire mass of recruits. Zhukov and Stalin overestimated the capabilities of our tank formations, ground and air forces. They did not quite clearly imagine what modern war is in terms of coordinating the actions of all branches of the armed forces - infantry, aviation, tanks and communications services. It seemed to them that the main thing was the number of divisions and they would be able to hold back any offensive and prevent the German advance into Soviet territory. Contrary to the leadership's point of view, the commander

The country's Navy Kuznetsov soberly assessed the real capabilities of our naval forces and the superiority of the Germans in the maritime theater of operations. Based on his experience in Spain (he was a naval attache there), in the spring of 1941, Kuznetsov developed and introduced a preliminary system of combat readiness: readiness No. 3 - fire weapons on duty are on alert; readiness No. 2 - all measures are taken to prepare to repel a possible enemy attack; readiness number 1 - the fleet is ready to immediately begin hostilities. That is why our Navy, which was subjected to an unexpected attack in the Baltic and the Black Sea, was able to repel the enemy's first strike almost without loss.

The NKVD and military intelligence should be held responsible for underestimating the powerful potential of the German armed forces. These departments were too busy getting political information and not doing enough studying Wehrmacht tactics.

I clearly remember the last pre-war days. Just returned from China Eitingon. Together with the mother of Ramon Mercader, the three of us were awarded in the Kremlin by Kalinin for the action against Trotsky in Mexico. The whole atmosphere seemed to exude enthusiasm and confidence. But on June 16, Fitin and Merkulov, the People's Commissar of State Security, returned from the Kremlin - both are worried about something. Fitin immediately called me and Melnikov, his deputy for the Far East, and said that the Boss (as we called Stalin among ourselves) found his report contradictory and ordered a more convincing conclusion to be drawn up on all intelligence information concerning the question of a possible outbreak of war with Germany. .

Contrary to what General Ivashutin and other authors of the memoirs write, I do not remember Beria's angry remarks on the memos of the Yastreba agent: "This is British disinformation. Find out who is the author of this provocation and punish." I don't remember any agent codenamed "Hawk" at all. In addition, there was no tradition in the intelligence and security services to write lengthy remarks on memos.

Equally unbelievable is the resolution attributed to Beria to recall and punish our ambassador in Berlin, Dekanozov, the former chief of intelligence of the NKVD, for bombarding him with "disinformation." The same people claim that Beria wrote to Stalin on June 21, offering to recall Dekanozov, but this was generally outside his competence, since Dekanozov went to work in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and reported directly to Molotov.

As mentioned above, intelligence reports about the possible start of a German invasion were contradictory. So, Sorge reported from Tokyo that the invasion was planned for June 1. At the same time, our residency from Berlin reported that the invasion was planned for June 15th. Prior to this, on March 11, military intelligence reported that the German invasion was scheduled for the spring. The picture was further confused by the intention of the leadership to start negotiations with the Germans.

At a cocktail party at the German embassy in Moscow a few days before the start of the war, Zoya Rybkina noticed that some decorations and paintings had been removed from the walls. Trying to identify new places to install listening devices, she found that the embassy workers were packing their bags for departure. This made us extremely worried.

At the Metropol Hotel, Yakovlev and Reichman, coordinators of counterintelligence operations against the Germans in Moscow, intercepted two German couriers carrying diplomatic bags. One was locked in the elevator car, while the other was locked in the bathroom of the suite where they lived. When the courier, who was in the elevator, realized that he was blocked, he pressed the button to call the elevator operator. Naturally, he was "rescued" by counterintelligence officers, who, in the five minutes at their disposal, opened his briefcase in the "suite" and photographed the contents. Among the documents was a letter from Ambassador Schulenberg to Ribbentrop, in which he wrote that he could be a mediator in resolving Soviet-German contradictions. At the same time, Schulenburg reported that the instructions to reduce the staff of the embassy had been carried out and the diplomats were leaving for Germany on schedule. Although there were signs of an approaching war

Obviously, this document, Schulenberg's position and his high reputation confirmed that the door to a peaceful settlement was still not closed.

On the day when Fitin returned from the Kremlin, Beria, having called me to his place, gave the order to organize a special group from among the intelligence officers in his direct subordination. She was supposed to carry out reconnaissance and sabotage actions in case of war. At the moment, our first task was to create a strike force from among experienced saboteurs capable of resisting any attempt to use provocative incidents on the border as a pretext for starting a war. Beria emphasized that our task is to prevent German provocateurs from carrying out actions similar to the one organized against Poland in 1939, when they seized the radio station in Gleiwitz in Germany. German provocateurs went on the air with anti-German statements, and then shot their own criminals, dressed in Polish uniforms, so that from the outside it looked like one of the units of the Polish army had really attacked the radio station.

I immediately suggested that Eitingon be appointed as my deputy. Beria agreed, and on the eve of the war, we began to look for people who could form the backbone of a special group that could be airlifted to the conflict areas on our European and Far Eastern borders. Eitingon's military experience was much greater than mine, and therefore in this matter I relied heavily on his assessments - it was he who acted as a link between our group and the military command. Together with him, we drew up plans for the destruction of the fuel depots that supplied the German motorized tank units, which had already begun to concentrate on our borders.

On June 20, 1941, Eitingon told me that a conversation with General Pavlov, commander of the Belorussian military district, made an unpleasant impression on him. Since he and Eitingon knew each other from Spain, he asked Pavlov for friendly advice on which border areas, in his opinion, should be paid special attention to, where provocations from the Germans are possible. In response, Pavlov said something, according to Eitingon, unintelligible, he seemed to understand nothing at all in matters of coordinating the actions of various services in modern warfare. Pavlov believed that no particular problems would arise even if the enemy managed to seize the initiative at the very beginning on the border, since he had enough forces in reserve to withstand any major breakthrough. In a word, Pavlov did not see the slightest need for subversive operations to disorganize the rear of the enemy troops.

On June 20, I stayed in my office all night, despite the fact that my wife and I had agreed to go to the dacha in the evening. A year earlier, she decided to leave the operational work at the Center and began teaching at the Higher School of the NKVD as an instructor in operational work with agents. She left school on Saturday, June 21, at about three o'clock in the afternoon. Fitin that evening met with Gavrilovich, the Yugoslav ambassador, at his dacha. So that fateful night I was the only one from the authorities who was at work. According to our rules, we could leave work only after the secretary of the people's commissar called and gave the boss's permission to go home. The department heads usually left at eight, going home or to safe houses to meet with agents, and then returning to their work at ten or eleven in the evening to summarize the messages received from the agents, which were immediately locked in safes. On Saturdays, however, no one usually returned to work after eight.

This time I did not receive permission to leave work either from Beria's secretary or from Merkulov and remained in my office, only called home and warned that I would be late. My wife agreed to wait for me at home and fell asleep peacefully. While waiting for a call from the authorities, I began to look through the documents, but after six, neither mail nor new messages arrived. There was only one call - from the commander of the border troops Maslennikov. He was visibly disappointed when I said that the Special Forces would be ready for

action within ten days. I knew that neither Beria nor Merkulov was there, but the secretariat was expecting them at any moment: they had been summoned to the Boss. I stayed in the office looking through the papers. I was overwhelmed by anxious thoughts, but I could not even imagine what a disaster would soon fall on all of us. Of course, I felt the threat of a military provocation or conflict, but I was not able to imagine its scale. I believed that no matter what the difficulties, we are able to control events.

At three o'clock in the morning the phone rang - Merkulov demanded that I immediately come to his office. There I found the heads of all the leading departments and departments. Merkulov officially announced to us that the war had begun: German troops had crossed our border. He immediately ordered that the entire apparatus be called to work on an alarm. By nine o'clock in the morning, he declared, each chief of the direction must propose specific measures in accordance with the plan of action in the conditions of the outbreak of war.

Fitin arrived at about nine. In the conference room of the intelligence department, we held a formal meeting of employees, where we announced the start of the war.

There was no panic, but during the course of the meeting the comments of the staff became laconic, and our real wits, especially Eitingon, refrained from their usual jokes.

INTELLIGENCE IN THE MILITARY HARD

Soviet intelligence also made a significant contribution to the victory over fascism, but it also shares with the country's military-political leadership the responsibility for miscalculations and mistakes made during the war years. I will return to the events on the eve of the war.

What intelligence and operational capabilities did the Soviet special services have in this period? There is an idea that the intelligence and operational groups of the network of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff (as the Main Intelligence Directorate - GRU was then called) and the Foreign Department (INO) of the NKVD owned reliable agents that had access to the highest echelons of the military command of the Wehrmacht and the political leadership of Germany, and that the Soviet leadership ignored the materials coming from these sources about the preparations and immediate plans for Hitler to unleash a war against the Soviet Union. How was it in reality?

The intelligence department of the General Staff and the INO NKVD had important sources of information with access to the leading circles of the German military command and political leadership, but did not have access to the documents. In addition, the information received from circles close to Hitler reflected the hesitation in the German leadership on the issue of making the final decision to attack the Soviet Union.

In the early and mid-30s, Berzin, Uritsky, Artuzov, Borovich (through the Red Army Intelligence Agency), Slutsky, Spiegelglas, Serebryansky, Eitingon (through the OGPU-NKVD) managed to create in Western Europe and the Far East (China Japan) powerful intelligence and sabotage apparatus, which had more than 300 sources of information. A special role in the creation of this apparatus was played by the so-called illegal special agents: Arnold Deutsch (Lang), an Austrian who attracted the well-known five of Kim Philby and others in England to cooperate; Theodor Mali, a Hungarian former Catholic priest, worked in England and France; Boguslavsky, Pole, former intelligence officer of the Polish General Staff; Sandor Rado, Leopold Trepper, Richard Sorge, Ernst Wollweber. In 1939, a connection was established with a valuable agent under the pseudonym "Friend", who was brought to cooperation ten years ago, being the deputy chief of Rem's stormtroopers. He was considered an influential person surrounded by Hitler who aspired to power. After the execution of Rem, "Friend" was kept by the German authorities in custody. Released in 1939, he was appointed to Shanghai as Consul General of Germany. T< he regularly met with Sorge, disavowing

some materials transmitted by the latter. Melnikov, deputy chief of foreign intelligence of the NKVD for the Far East, worked directly as a "Friend".

The fate of these people was different. Deitch died in 1942 on a Soviet transport torpedoed by a German submarine en route to England. Mali and Boguslavsky were shot at the direction of Yezhov during the years of terror Rado and Trepper, having spoiled the nerves of the Germans with the Red Chapel, ended up in the camps of the NKVD-MGB. Sorge was hanged by the Japanese. Wollweber headed intelligence, then the MGB of the GDR, but became a victim of Ulbricht's intrigues.

The mass repressions in 1937-1938 dealt a severe blow to our intelligence services, but intelligence activities continued. Although we temporarily lost contact with a number of valuable agents, the agent networks in Scandinavia, Germany and the Benelux countries were lucky. Sources of information in Germany (Schulze - Boysen -

Air Force headquarters, Harnack - the Ministry of Economics, Kukhoff and Stebe - in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Leman - Gestapo) were brought to cooperation by the illegal spouses Zarubins, resident Belkin, agent Girshfeld, who escaped repression. Communication with them was maintained regularly. In addition to these sources, in 1940 they were supplemented by the famous actress Olga Chekhova and Prince Janusz Radziwill, who collaborated with us on the basis of trust and recruitment obligations, and had direct access to Goering. The NKVD resident Gudimovich, together with his wife Mordzhinskaya, managed to create a powerful group in Warsaw, which carefully monitored the German transportation of troops and equipment to Poland in 1940-1941. We also had serious intelligence positions in Italy. Resident Rogatnev managed to attract the nephew of Count Ciano to cooperation -

Minister of Foreign Affairs in Mussolini's government.

Back in 1937, our intelligence, under the leadership of the deputy head of the INO NKVD Shpigelglas, obtained important documentary information about the operational strategic games conducted by the command of the Reichswehr (later the Wehrmacht). These documents were destined to play a significant role in the development of events and in changing the actions of our leadership before the German-Soviet war. After the operational strategy games played by von Seeckt and later by Blomberg, Seeckt's "testament" appeared, which stated that Germany could not win the war with Russia if the fighting dragged on for more than two months and if during the first month of the war it was not possible capture Leningrad, Kiev, Moscow and defeat the main forces of the Red Army, simultaneously occupying the main centers of the military industry and the extraction of raw materials in the European part of the USSR.

I think that the results of the mentioned operational-strategic games were also one of the reasons that prompted Hitler in 1939 to come up with the initiative to conclude a non-aggression pact. It is significant, however, that the Germans preferred to carry out probing approaches to the Soviet leadership to implement this idea not through intelligence, but through diplomatic channels through their ambassador to Turkey, von Papen, back in April 1939.

My duties included supervising the German direction of our intelligence, directly headed in 1938-1942 by Major of State Security (later Major General) Zhuravlev. The leadership has always attached particular importance to the German direction. In 1940-1941, our residency in Berlin, although it was headed by an inexperienced worker Amayak Kobulov, nevertheless acted

actively.

Intelligence materials from Berlin, Rome, Tokyo, which is confirmed by archival documents now made public, were regularly reported to the government. However, the intelligence leadership was not aware that after Molotov's visit to Berlin in November 1940, secret negotiations began with Germany. Thus, the obvious inevitability of a military clash at the same time was combined with a very serious consideration of Hitler's proposals to delimit the spheres of geopolitical interests of Germany, Japan, Italy and the USSR.

Only now it is obvious to me that the probing conversations of Molotov and Schullenburg, the ambassador

Germany in the USSR in February-March 1941 reflected not only Hitler's attempt to mislead Stalin and take him by surprise with sudden aggression, but also hesitations in the German leadership on the issue of a war with the Soviet Union until victory over England. The information we received and disinformation from a Latvian collaborating with the Gestapo reflected these hesitations. That is why even reliable sources, reporting on Hitler's decision to attack the USSR (reports by Harnack, Schulze-Boysen, the wife of a prominent German diplomat (code name "Jun"), close to Ribbentrop) in September 1940 - May 1941, did not vouch for the reliability of the received data and with references to Goering linked in one way or another the impending aggression of Hitler against the USSR with a possible agreement on a truce with the British.

Unfortunately, on the basis of the information received, we connected the correct conclusion about the obvious preparation for war also with the results of the supposedly upcoming German-Soviet negotiations at the highest level on territorial problems, and according to reports from England (Philby, Cairncross and others) with a possible settlement of the issue of ending Anglo-German war. It is difficult for me to judge how seriously Hitler actually thought to negotiate with Stalin. I remember that there were also reports that Ribbentrop consistently, right up to Hitler's final decision, opposed the war with Russia, at least until the Anglo-German military confrontation was settled.

Although Stalin was irritated with intelligence materials, at the same time he sought to use them in order to prevent war through secret diplomatic negotiations on territorial issues, and also - this was entrusted directly to us - to bring to the German military circles information about the inevitability for Germany of a long wars with Russia. The emphasis was on the fact that we created a military-industrial base in the Urals, invulnerable to German attack.

Hitler made the final decision on the attack on June 14, 1941, the day after the Germans became aware of the TASS statement about the failure of the rumors about the German-Soviet war. Interestingly, the TASS statement was first circulated in Germany and only on the second day was published in Pravda.

Unfortunately, our intelligence, both military and political, having intercepted data on the timing of the attack and correctly determined the inevitability of an imminent war, did not predict the rate of the Nazi command on blitzkrieg tactics. This was a fatal mistake, for the blitzkrieg stake indicated that the Germans were planning their attack regardless of the end of the war with England. A major shortcoming of our intelligence work was the poor organization of the analysis of the information received by agents. Convincing proof of this conclusion can be the fact that only during the war both the Intelligence Agency and the NKVD created departments in the system of intelligence directorates for the constant evaluation and processing of intelligence information coming from foreign sources.

On the very first day of the war, I was instructed to lead all reconnaissance and sabotage work in the rear of the German army along the lines of the Soviet state security agencies. For this, a special unit was formed in the NKVD -

Special group under the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. By order of the People's Commissariat, my appointment as head of the group was formalized on July 5, 1941. My deputies were Eitingon, Melnikov, Kakuchaya. Serebryansky, Maklyarsky, Drozdov, Gudimovich, Orlov, Kiselev, Massya, Lebedev, Timashkov, Mordvinov became the heads of the leading directions in the fight against the German armed forces that invaded the Baltic states, Belarus and Ukraine. The heads of all services and divisions of the NKVD, by order of the People's Commissariat, were obliged to provide the Special Group with assistance with people, equipment, weapons for the deployment of reconnaissance and sabotage work in the near and far rear of the German troops.

The main tasks of the Special Group were: conducting intelligence operations against Germany and its satellites, organizing a guerrilla war, creating an agent network in the territories,

under German occupation, directing special radio games with German intelligence in order to misinform the enemy.

We immediately created a military formation of the Special Group - a separate motorized rifle brigade for special purposes (OMSBON NKVD of the USSR), which was commanded at different times by Gridnev and Orlov. By decision of the Central Committee of the Party and the Comintern, all political emigrants who were in the Soviet Union were invited to join this unit of the Special Group of the NKVD. The brigade was formed in the first days of the war at the Dynamo stadium. Under our command we had more than twenty-five thousand soldiers and commanders, of which two thousand were foreigners - Germans, Austrians, Spaniards, Americans, Chinese, Vietnamese, Poles, Czechs, Bulgarians and Romanians. We had at our disposal the best Soviet athletes, including champions in boxing and athletics - they became the basis of sabotage formations sent to the front and thrown behind enemy lines.

In October 1941, the Special Group, due to the expanded scope of work, was reorganized into an independent 2nd department of the NKVD, still directly subordinate to Beria. At the same time, I continued to be deputy chief of the NKVD overseas intelligence.

The war dramatically changed the attitude of the Soviet leadership to intelligence work and incoming information. In 1942, an urgent reorganization of the intelligence agencies was carried out. The General Staff created two intelligence departments: one (headed by Kuznetsov) - to directly serve the needs of the fronts and the Headquarters, and others (Ilyichev) - to coordinate overseas intelligence in countries, including the United States, that did not become German occupation zones.

The 1st (intelligence) directorate of the NKVD was also divided into the 4th (the former Special Group, and then the 2nd department headed by me) - for reconnaissance and sabotage work against the Germans and Japan, both on our territory and in the occupied countries of Europe and the Middle East, and the 1st (Fitin), the scope of which extended to the USA, England, Latin America, India, Australia. The Navy left its intelligence department (Vorontsov) without structural changes.

An independent department (Selivanovsky) for sending agents and sabotage groups to the rear of the German armed forces was created in 1943 in the SMERSH military counterintelligence. The intelligence department also operated at the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement. However, he mainly performed only coordinating functions, not conducting undercover intelligence in the rear of the German troops without interacting with military intelligence and counterintelligence. Some independence was shown only by party and Komsomol activists, who for the most part carried out propaganda work behind enemy lines. And yet they relied, as a rule, on the secret support of their activities through our military intelligence and the NKVD.

Important information obtained was reported to Stalin, and the direct coordination of intelligence work was carried out first by Molotov, then by Golikov, and at the end of the war by Beria. In addition, with the outbreak of hostilities, departments for processing and analyzing valuable information were created in each intelligence department, which greatly facilitated the task of the Headquarters in making decisions.

At the beginning of the war, we experienced an acute shortage of qualified personnel. Eitingon and I suggested that former intelligence and state security officers be released from prisons. Beria's cynicism and simplicity in deciding people's destinies were clearly manifested in his reaction to our proposal. Beria was not at all interested in whether those whom we recommended for work were guilty or innocent. He asked one single question:

Are you sure we need them?

"Quite sure," I replied.

- Then contact Kobulov, let him release. And use them immediately.

I got to view the case of the people I requested. It followed from them that all

were arrested on the initiative and direct order of the top leadership - Stalin and Molotov. Unfortunately, Spiegelglas, Karin, Mali and other scouts had already been shot by this time.

After being released, some of my close friends found themselves homeless in Moscow: their families were evicted from the capital. They all settled in my apartment, on Gorky Street, in the house where the Dynamo sports store was located. The floor above was the apartment of Merkulov, Beria's first deputy, who sometimes came down to me if something urgent needed to be discussed. Both of our apartments were also used as safe houses for meetings with foreign diplomats. It so happened that Merkulov called me just at the moment when my "guests" were sitting in the living room, and since he was going to come in to talk about urgent matters, I had to hide them in the bedroom in order to avoid meeting the people's commissar with the recently released former criminals.

Of the four friends who lived in my apartment, Kaminsky was a very experienced collaborator - he remained with me until he was sent to Zhitomir, to the rear of the Germans. In his pince-nez and three-piece suit, Kaminsky looked like a typical French businessman. Seeing him off, my wife could not hold back her tears. Kaminsky himself exuded optimism. According to him, he is really happy that he was again attracted to work. Interspersing his speech with French anecdotes, in order to reassure my wife a little, Kaminsky said that this was a great success for him, even if he was destined to die. He was issued immediately after landing in Zhytomyr. This was done by a priest, an agent of the local NKVD, who by this time had already collaborated with the Gestapo. Kaminsky immediately sensed the ambush set up in the safe house and shot himself. We learned about his fate three or four months later. Everyone who was close to him was blocked and killed in the firefight. Other Chekists, released from prison and previously dismissed, began to work in the bodies, but with a demotion. Most of them were sent at the head of special groups to the rear of the Germans. Some of them died, but some - Medvedev and Prokopyuk -

received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for successful partisan operations in the rear of Germans.

The repressions of 1938-1939 taught me a lot: now I was not so naive as to sign documents for the rehabilitation of my friends who were released from prison in 1941. My reputation had already been "tarnished by association with these people" arrested as enemies of the people. In order for their rehabilitation to look objectively justified, I asked Fitin to sign the documents necessary for the return to service of people, especially those close to me. This turned out to be a far-sighted step: in 1946 and 1953, when I was accused of contributing to the release of my friends who were enemies of the people, I had the opportunity to refer to Fitin's signature. In the fate of Ssrebryansky, my petition for his reinstatement in the party in 1941 played a fatal role: in 1953 he was accused of having escaped capital punishment only thanks to the intercession of a traitor like me. He died in prison during interrogation by the investigator Tsaregradsky in 1956.

On June 26, 1941, I received another appointment to the post of Deputy Chief of Staff of the NKVD for combating German paratroopers. In 1942, a select division of paratroopers was transferred under my command. They were assigned a squadron of transport aircraft and long-range bombers. Throughout the war, we maintained close cooperation with the commander of long-range aviation, Marshal Golovanov, a close friend of Eitingon in the military

academy.

The situation at the front after the German invasion developed, as you know, tragically. The power of the German tank armada exceeded all our preliminary data. The scale of the defeat of the Red Army in the Baltic States, Belarus and Ukraine was staggering. Until August, we undertook several sabotage operations to rescue units of the Red Army.

The armies that were surrounded, however, our plans failed: these units were scattered and could no longer be a base for the deployment of a guerrilla war.

Then, in cooperation with district and local party organizations, we began to send partisan formations to the rear of the Germans, including experienced intelligence officers and radio operators in their composition. During the war years, the Special Group - the 4th Directorate of the NKVD and its military formations, as follows from official documents, carried out the responsible tasks of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command (1941-1945), the Moscow Defense Headquarters (October-December 1941), the commander of the Western Front (1941-1943), Headquarters of the Defense of the Main Caucasian Range (1942-1943), Commander of the North Caucasian Front (1942-1943), Commander of the Transcaucasian Front (1942-1943), Commander of the Central Front (1943), commander of the 1st Belorussian Front (1943-1944).

More than two thousand operational groups with a total number of fifteen thousand people were sent to the rear of the enemy. Twenty-three of our officers received the highest government award - they were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. More than eight thousand people were awarded orders and medals. Marshals Zhukov and Rokossovsky specifically appealed to the NKVD with a request to provide them with detachments from the 4th Directorate of the NKVD to destroy enemy communications and support the offensive operations of the Red Army in Belarus, Poland and the Caucasus. Units of the 4th directorate and a separate special-purpose motorized rifle brigade destroyed 157 thousand German soldiers and officers, liquidated 87 high-ranking German officials, exposed and neutralized 2045 enemy agent groups. Eitingon and I were entrusted with directing all these operations. In the history of the NKVD, this is perhaps the only chapter that his successors continue to be proud of. At all official events dedicated to the next anniversary of the battle of Moscow or Stalingrad, as well as the liberation of Belarus, the names of partisans and underground fighters who were under our command are always mentioned. Kuznetsov, Medvedev, Prokopyuk, Vaupshasov, Karasev, Mirkovsky, Prudnikov, Shikhov, Kudrya, Lyagin are heroes of resistance to fascism in the occupied territories for our people.

From 1945 to 1992, we published about five thousand books and articles about the military operations of the Special Group and the 4th Directorate in the Great Patriotic War. During these years I was in active service, then I was arrested, imprisoned, finally released from prison and rehabilitated. And you will not find my name in any of these publications. Where my signature was on the documents, an ellipsis appeared. At first I was not mentioned for reasons of secrecy, and later my name was withdrawn because I was a convicted felon and an unwanted witness.

I will not dwell on the well-known exploits of the soldiers and officers who fought with me during the war years. In the collections under my editorship, published in 1970-1992, more than three thousand names of heroes who fought in a separate motorized rifle brigade for special purposes are named. And here I would like to focus on the most important operations of Soviet intelligence, tell about the heroes of the secret war, about whom little is known, but who played a significant role in the military-political events of that time.

A significant contribution to our reconnaissance and sabotage operations behind enemy lines was made by a partisan formation under the command of Colonel Medvedev. He was the first to get in touch with Otto Skorzeny, the head of the special operations of the Nazi security service. Medvedev and Kuznetsov established that Skorzeny was preparing groups to attack the American and Soviet embassies in Tehran, where the first Big Three conference was to take place in 1943. A group of militants Skorzeny was trained near Vinnitsa, where Medvedev's partisan detachment was operating. It was here, on the territory occupied by the Nazis, that Hitler placed a branch of his Headquarters. Our young employee Nikolai Kuznetsov, under the guise of a senior lieutenant of the Wehrmacht, established friendly relations with an officer of the German intelligence service Oster, as

times busy looking for people with experience in fighting Russian partisans. He needed these people for an operation against the Soviet high command. Having owed Kuznetsov, Oster offered to pay him off with Iranian carpets, which he was going to bring to Vinnitsa from a business trip to Tehran. This message, immediately transmitted to Moscow, coincided with information from other sources and helped us prevent actions in Tehran against the Big Three.

Kuznetsov (code name "Pukh") personally eliminated several governors of the German administration in Galicia. These acts of retribution against the organizers of terror against the Soviet people were committed by him with unparalleled courage in broad daylight on the streets of Rovno and Lvov. Dressed in a German military uniform, he boldly approached the enemy, announced the death sentence and fired at point-blank range. Each carefully prepared action of this kind was insured by the combat support group. Once he was received by Hitler's assistant Gauleiter Erich Koch, head of the administration of Poland and Galicia. Kuznetsov was supposed to kill him. But when Koch told Kuznetsov to return to his unit as soon as possible, because a major offensive was to begin near Kursk in the next ten days, Kuznetsov decided not to kill Koch in order to be able to immediately return to Medvedev and transmit an urgent radiogram to Moscow.

On the instructions of the Headquarters, Kuznetsov's information about the preparation by the Germans of a strategic offensive operation was rechecked and confirmed by the scouts Aleksakhin and Vorobyov sent by us to the occupied Orel.

Various rumors circulate around Kuznetsov's personality, casting doubt on the fact that he could have successfully played the role of a German officer for so long. I heard that he was sent to Germany even before the start of the war. Activists of "Memorial", an organization uniting the prisoners of the Gulag, tried to associate his name with the repressions against the Germans deported to Kazakhstan from Siberia and the Volga region. Kuznetsov had nothing to do with this. As I said earlier, he was Russian, originally from Siberia, knew the German language well and spoke it fluently, because he lived among the Germans living there. He was recruited by the local NKVD and in 1939 was sent to Moscow to study. He was trained individually as a special agent for possible use against the German embassy in Moscow. Handsome, blond, he could pass for a German, that is, a Soviet citizen of German origin. He had a network of informers among Moscow artists. As an actor, he was introduced to some foreign diplomats. Gradually, the German embassy workers began to pay attention to an interesting young man of typical Aryan appearance, with a well-established reputation as a connoisseur of ballet. It was led by Raikhman, deputy head of the counterintelligence department, and Ilyin, state security commissar for work with the intelligentsia. Kuznetsov, performing their tasks, will always receive maximum information not only from diplomatic workers, but also from friends whom he made among artists and writers. The personal file of agent Kuznetsov contains information about him as a lover of most of the Moscow ballet stars, some of them he shared with German diplomats in the interests of business.

Kuznetsov participated in operations to intercept German diplomatic mail, since from time to time diplomatic couriers stayed at the Metropol and National hotels, and not at the German embassy. Using his diplomatic connections, Kuznetsov was able to warn us about when the diplomatic couriers were going to arrive and when it would be possible for our agents, stationed in these hotels and equipped with the necessary photographic equipment, to quickly reshoot the documents.

In 1942, Kuznetsov was abandoned in the Rivne region. He appeared there in the form of a German quartermaster officer. According to the legend developed by us, Kuznetsov was allegedly on wounded leave and was instructed to organize the delivery of food and warm clothes for his division stationed near Leningrad. He posed as a German who lived for several years in the Baltic states, where he was mobilized. According to him, he returned to Germany only in 1940 as a repatriate. Walked

the war, the movement of people was very intense, it would take a long time for the Abwehr or the Gestapo to verify his identity. Kuznetsov was handed over to me by Ilyin. Documents for his work in the German rear were prepared by the Austrian Miller and his student Gromushkin. Our operative Okun actively participated in the preparation of Kuznetsov for operations behind German lines. I spent many hours with Kuznetsov preparing for future assignments. I remember him as a man of rare talent to remain calm when performing combat missions, realistic and reasonable in his actions. But gradually he began to believe very much in his luck and made a fatal mistake, trying to cross the front line to meet with units of the Red Army. Kuznetsov and his people were captured by Bandera, who collaborated with the Germans. This happened in 1944 in one of the villages near Lvov. Our investigation showed that Kuznetsov blew himself up with a hand grenade: in the archives of the Gestapo, we found a telegram in which the Bandera people informed the Gestapo about the capture of a group of Red Army officers, one of whom was dressed in a German uniform. Bandera believed that this man, who was killed in a shootout, was exactly the one whom the German special service had been unsuccessfully looking for all this time. The Germans were given some forged documents prepared by us in the name of Lieutenant Paul Siebert (Kuznetsov's pseudonym), and part of Kuznetsov's report to the Center with amazing details of the destruction of high-ranking German representatives in Ukraine. He was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Since Kuznetsov was not married, his brother accepted the award. In 1991, Kuznetsov would have turned eighty years old. I spoke at an evening dedicated to his memory at the KGB club.

Operations carried out by guerrilla battle groups sometimes acquired of strategic importance and played an important role in the disorganization of rear communications, when in 1944 our offensive was launched in Belarus. These operations are known as "Rail War", or "Concert". On the eve of our offensive in Belorussia, we put out of action the main railway supply lines of the German army.

The partisans of a separate special-purpose brigade also provided very significant assistance to the Red Army units during the battle near Moscow. When the Germans approached the capital in the fall of 1941, our separate brigade was given the task of protecting the center of Moscow and the Kremlin at all costs. Our people took up positions in the House of the Unions, in the immediate vicinity of the Kremlin. At this critical moment for the fate of the capital, our brigade was, perhaps, the only combat formation that had a sufficient number of mines and people capable of laying them. By direct order of the General Staff and Zhukov personally, we mined the far and near approaches to Moscow, and our motorized unit helped eliminate German motorcyclists and armored personnel carriers that broke through to the bridge across the Moscow River near Sheremetyevo Airport. The Germans were no longer able to get closer to this place to Moscow. Today, huge anti-tank gouges stand here in memory of those days - a symbol of courage

defenders of the capital.

In case the Germans succeeded in capturing the city, our brigade mined a number of buildings in Moscow where meetings of the German high command could be held, as well as important structures both in the capital and around it. We mined several government dachas near Moscow (among them, however, there was no Stalin's dacha). With our young employee Igor Shchors, who entered the service in the NKVD in 1940, Maklyarsky and I instructed him, provided him with documents and got him a job as the chief engineer of water management in the suburbs of Moscow, not far from the Stalinist dacha. In the event that the area was occupied by the Germans, he was to use the water and sewer systems for sabotage and hiding agents. As a result of the bombing, part of the water pipes were damaged, and this prevented the normal supply of water to Stalin's dacha. Shchors supervised the repair work carried out by security officers, the accident was quickly eliminated in three hours. He was awarded the Order of the Badge of Honor, but he could not receive this award, since it was awarded to a person whose documents are Shchors

used to get a job, and at that time it was impossible to reveal his real name. In 1945, Shchors was sent to Bulgaria, where he was to ensure the extraction and shipment of uranium to the Soviet Union for our nuclear industry.

After my arrest in 1953, I learned that I was also accused of planning to use mines planted in government dachas to destroy Soviet leaders. Investigators said the mines could be set off by remote control on Beria's orders to destroy Stalin's successors. All this was a crude invention.

In October 1941, Moscow was in serious danger, Beria ordered us to organize an intelligence network in the city after it was captured by the Germans. Our families were evacuated, as were most of the NKVD apparatus. We moved from the Lubyanka to the premises of the Fire School in the northern suburbs of Moscow near the headquarters of the Comintern. I sat in a room with Serov, Chernyshev and Bogdan Kobulov, Beria's deputies, using this reserve NKVD command post, set up in case of military operations in the city, if the Germans broke through our defenses.

In Moscow, we have created three independent intelligence networks. One was led by my old friend from Ukraine, Major Drozdov (later promoted to General). For the purpose of conspiracy, he was made deputy head of the pharmacy department of Moscow. In the event of the occupation of Moscow, he was supposed to supply medicines to the German command and gain confidence in him. He was not known in Moscow, as he was appointed deputy head of the Moscow police just a few months before the start of the war. Fedoseev, the head of the counterintelligence department of the NKVD in Moscow, did a great deal of work in preparing the Moscow underground and in mobilizing our agents to counter German sabotage in Moscow. On our line, Maklyarsky and Massya were responsible for this work. One of the underground workers, on whom Beria chose, was the life of Meshik - in 1953 he was shot along with Beria. In addition to these two intelligence networks, we created another autonomous group, which was supposed to destroy Hitler and his entourage if they appeared in Moscow after its capture. This operation was entrusted to the composer Knipper, brother Olga Chekhova, and his wife Marina Garikovna. Fedotov, head of the Main Counterintelligence Directorate of the NKVD, was supposed to lead the underground.

Various books, in particular Khrushchev's memoirs, talk about the panic that seized Stalin in the first days of the war. For my part, I can say that I have not seen anything like it. Stalin did not take refuge in his dacha. Published records of the Kremlin visitor's log show that he regularly received people and directly followed the worsening situation every day. From the very beginning of the war, Stalin hosted Beria and Merkulov in his Kremlin two or three times a day. They usually returned to the NKVD late in the evening, and sometimes transmitted their orders directly from the Kremlin. It seemed to me that the mechanism of command and control over the execution of orders worked without any failures. Both Eitingon and I lived in a deep faith in the final victory over the Germans, which was due in no small part to the calm, businesslike manner in which daily leadership was carried out from above.

I must say that sometimes it was extremely difficult to carry out the orders received. When in October 1941 I was summoned to Beria's office, where Malenkov was, and ordered to mine the most important structures in Moscow and on the outskirts of it, such as the main railway stations, defense industry facilities, some residential buildings, some metro stations and a stadium "Dynamo", the explosives were supposed to be ready in twenty-four hours. We worked around the clock to fulfill the order. And Malenkov and Beria at that time, without rest, calmly, in a businesslike manner, worked in the NKVD on the Lubyanka.

On November 6, 1941, I received an invitation to a solemn meeting dedicated to the October Revolution. Traditionally, these meetings were held at the Bolshoi Theatre, but this

once for security reasons - on the platform of the Mayakovskaya metro station. We went down the escalator and went out to the platform. On one side was an electric train with open doors, where there were tables with sandwiches and soft drinks. At the end of the platform was a platform for members of the Politburo.

The government arrived by train from the other side of the platform. Stalin got out of the car, accompanied by Beria and Malenkov. The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Moscow Council Pronin. Stalin spoke for about half an hour. His speech made a deep impression on me: the firmness and confidence of the leader convinced us of our ability to resist the enemy. The next day, the traditional parade took place on Red Square, which was held with great enthusiasm, despite the heavy snowfall. There was a stamp on my pass: "Access everywhere" - this meant that I could also go to the main tribune of the Mausoleum, where the Soviet leaders who were hosting the parade were standing.

Beria and Merkulov warned me that in case of emergencies I should immediately report to them by going up to the Mausoleum. The situation was actually critical: the advanced units of the Germans were very close to the city. Among the operational workers serving the parade were young Fisher, the head of the communications department of our service, and a radio operator with all the necessary equipment. We maintained constant contact with the headquarters of the brigade defending Moscow. The snowfall was so thick that the Germans were unable to send planes to bomb Red Square. The order to the troops participating in the parade was clear: no matter what happened, remain calm and maintain discipline. This parade further strengthened our faith in the ability to defend Moscow and ultimately defeat the enemy.

Even in these troubled hours for the country, we were looking for the enemy's weak points in order to turn the course of events in our favor. We received valuable information from Count Nelidov, a former officer in the tsarist and white armies, a major double agent for the Abwehr and British intelligence. On the instructions of Canaris, Count Nelidov took part in the strategic military "games" of the German General Staff in 1936-1937. On the eve of the German invasion of Poland (he was in Warsaw on a reconnaissance mission), he was arrested by the Polish counterintelligence. Having seized Western Ukraine in 1939, we found him in the Lvov prison and brought him to Moscow.

Nelidov was developed by Vasily Zarubin, Zoya Rybkina and Pavel Zhuravlev, head of the German branch of intelligence of the NKVD. In 1941-1942, Nelidov was planned to be used to counter British intelligence agents who had settled in Moscow. At that time, Zhuravlev, Rybkina, and I did not attach due importance to Nelidov's testimony about the main orientation of the Abwehr in reconnaissance and sabotage work in the conditions of a blitzkrieg. However, the situation changed dramatically after our defeats in the first days and months of the war. It was then that we returned to the first interrogations of Nelidov. His testimony was compared with the materials received in 1937 from Shpigelglas about the military-strategic "games" at the headquarters of the Wehrmacht, and the Germans' stake on the "blitzkrieg" became obvious to everyone. Stalin's reaction to our message was immediate. For extended interrogations of Nelidov and familiarization with all the operational documents of the thirties, the head of the Intelligence Department of the Red Army, Golikov, and the head of the operational department of the General Staff, Major General Vasilevsky, arrived at the NKVD. They were greatly impressed by his knowledge, connections and characterization of the mood of the German high society.

command.

Nelidov said that the Germans could defeat us only if the war continued for two or three months. But if during this time they do not take possession of Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, Donbass, the North Caucasus and, of course, Baku with its oil, the German invasion is doomed to failure. A huge number of tanks and motorized formations needed for a blitzkrieg could only operate effectively on territories with a fairly developed road network, and the Germans did not have a reserve of fuel to wage a protracted war, especially for the ships of the German fleet, and in particular

submarine.

In October and November 1941, we received reliable information from Berlin that the German army had almost run out of ammunition, oil and gasoline to continue active offensive operations. Everything pointed to the imminent pause in the German advance. These broadcast data are from Arvid Harnack (code name "Corsican"), an anti-fascist, adviser to the German Ministry of Economics. A member of a prominent family of writers and philosophers, he was recruited during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1932 and from then on fed information to Soviet intelligence for a decade until he was exposed. In December 1942 he was tried and hanged. His wife, American Mildred Fish Harnack, whom he met while studying at the University of Wisconsin, was also arrested and executed in 1945 for anti-fascist activities.

In March 1939, when I became deputy chief of intelligence of the NKVD, one of my main tasks was to infiltrate illegal immigrants in Western Europe and create an agent network associated with the Germans who had diplomatic cover. This was especially true of Germany, which was the focus of all our work. After the repressions of 1937-1938, new people began to deal with German affairs in intelligence, and our contacts with agents were temporarily interrupted. It was decided to sharply intensify these contacts. The flight of Alexander Orlov in 1938 cast suspicion on the leading cadres of the Foreign Department; Spiegelglas, Mali, Belkin, Serebryansky and other employees who controlled our intelligence networks in Western Europe were arrested, which made it much more difficult to obtain intelligence information. When I took over this section, I had to send new and often inexperienced people abroad. As a result, from November 1938 to March 1939, the flow of intelligence from Western Europe dropped sharply. The decision taken by Beria and Stalin in 1939 to open a special intelligence school for personnel training meant that we would receive the first specialists no sooner than in two years. Meanwhile, the need for these personnel became more and more acute. We desperately needed new people. The situation grew tense every day: Hitler was preparing to seize Poland. The prospects for unleashing a war in Europe loomed more and more distinctly. Stalin demanded from Beria details about the German combat formations and the strategic plans of Berlin.

Since the people who were previously in charge of the intelligence network in Western Europe (Orlov in Spain, Krivitsky in Holland, Reiss and Steinberg in Switzerland) either became defectors or were subjected to repression, it was extremely difficult to convince Beria and Merkulov to take risks and activate those structures, which they once led. Fortunately, not everyone involved in the selection and recruitment of agents were repressed. Some, like Lang and Hirschfeld, were temporarily placed in the active reserve while their fate was decided at the top. Our people were still in Berlin and Paris. The Cambridge group resumed its activities, despite fears that it was illuminated by Orlov, who had defected to the West. In the end, we managed to convince Fitin that we should still take risks and restore our old undercover connections, no matter how dangerous it may be. He and I reported our decision to Beria, and he supported us. The difficult decision to restore contacts with our agents that had been interrupted for six months was nevertheless made, although we feared that during this time some of them might have already been captured and re-recruited. But it was the end of April 1939, and the specter of war on the horizon was becoming more and more clear.

I remember that it was then at the Center that the fate of Kim Philby was decided. When permission was requested from London for his transfer to the headquarters of British intelligence, I personally agreed on the condition that he himself voluntarily decide on a "double game", taking into account the special risk.

Vasilevsky was sent to France as the new head of our residency, who was supposed to restore the decayed ties. A group of officers was assigned to Germany, Finland, Poland and Czechoslovakia. It took them about six months

to check the status and reliability of our intelligence network, with which no contact has been maintained lately.

In 1939-1940 we restored ties and began active work. Created by military intelligence and the NKVD, an underground network known as the "Red Chapel" operated throughout most of World War II. Agents of the "Red Chapel" transmitted coded messages to the Center by radio.

A few words about how all this was carried out in practice. Military intelligence had its own intelligence network in Germany, France, Belgium and Switzerland and operated independently of the NKVD. In 1938-1939, before the start of the war, the military turned out to be quite far-sighted and sent two employees, Trepper and Gurevich, to France and Belgium, along with radio operators, to work in wartime conditions. During this period, the military also had its illegal residency in Switzerland, led by the former worker of the Hungarian section of the Comintern, Sandor Rada Ursula Kuczynska (code name "Sonya"), who later, in 1941, became a liaison between us and the German physicist Klaus Fuchs, who worked in England .

Serious mistakes were made in the preparation of residencies for operational activities in Western Europe in the conditions of hostilities and the transition to an illegal position. The agent network of Trepper, Gurevich and Rado was too strongly connected with sources of Jewish nationality, which made it vulnerable to the German secret services. The leadership of the Intelligence Agency, as well as the INO NKVD, neglected the proper training of radio operators to maintain communications in war conditions. On the eve of the war, the NKVD managed to create a powerful intelligence network in Germany, led by Amayak Kobulov, Korotkov and Zhuravlev. Military intelligence in Germany also had important agents - Ilse Stebe in the press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rudolf Shelia, a high-ranking German diplomat.

In June 1941, when Germany attacked the USSR, our intelligence did not have centralized control over all the intelligence networks that sent us their messages independently of each other. The Red Army Intelligence Directorate was better prepared to switch from couriers and diplomatic bags to clandestine radio broadcasts: the agents had the necessary equipment. It was only in April 1941 that we sent instructions to the residencies of Western Europe on preparation for work in the conditions of an imminent war. Amayak Kobulov and Korotkov, who were in Europe, were obliged to speed up the training of radio operators and provide them with reliable equipment, as well as create backup radio apartments.

Schulze-Boysen ("Foreman"), Harnack ("Corsican") and Kukhof ("Old Man"), badly instructed by Kobulov and Korotkov, violated the elementary rule of conspiracy: they maintained a linear connection. In addition, all three agents had one radio operator.

In October 1941, having lost contact due to poor-quality equipment and the unskilled work of radio operators of our agents in Berlin, the intelligence department of military intelligence and the NKVD made an unforgivable mistake. Gurevich ("Kent"), a resident in Brussels, received a cipher telegram by radio, according to which he was to leave for Berlin with a radio transmitter. He handed it over to the Corsican and the Chief. Upon returning to Brussels, "Kent" confirmed by radio the successful completion of the mission and reported to Moscow the information received in Berlin about the difficulties that the Germans were experiencing in supplying and replenishing reserves, about the realistic assessment by the German command of the failure of the blitzkrieg, about a possible enemy offensive in the spring and summer 1942 with the aim of mastering our oil fields.

Such valuable information, transmitted in November 1941 and confirmed three months later, was reported to the government, but, unfortunately, did not play its due role, in view of the fact that on December 13, 1941, the radio operator and cipher "Kent" with codes were captured. German counterintelligence and the Gestapo did not have much difficulty in 1942, after a brief development, to arrest the leaders of the Red Chapel in Berlin and others.

cities of Western Europe.

On August 5, 1942, we dropped two of our paratrooper agents into Germany - Arthur Hesselsr and Albert Barth. But the Germans were already keeping under surveillance the group with which they were sent to communicate, and they were arrested. Hessler died in the Gestapo, and the Germans recruited Bart, and he began to play a radio game with us, which, by the way, we immediately figured out. During the interrogation, Barth uncovered our agent Willy Lehmann ("Breitenbach"), who had been cooperating with us since 1935. Leman was a member of the Gestapo and supplied us with extremely important information. In 1935-1941, he handed over to us the most important materials on the developments of the Gestapo to introduce agents into the environment of Russian emigrants and into the communist underground. We also learned from Lehmann which sources of Polish counterintelligence were recruited and used by the Germans after the exposure of the Polish resident Sosnowski in Berlin in 1936. In addition, the latter fell into our hands in 1939 and gave a detailed orientation on the capabilities of the Polish agents in Germany.

Leman was arrested on the street and secretly, without trial, executed. The Gestapo informed the wife that her husband had disappeared and was being intensively searched for. After the war, we found only his registration card in the archives of the Plötzensee prison in Berlin - there are no other traces of him left. Leman during the war years was the only officer of the Gestapo who collaborated with us.

In the archives of the Gestapo, we found information about the "Red Chapel". And although Bart's name appears there, Leman is not even mentioned. Perhaps this is due to the unwillingness to cast a shadow on the Gestapo, in the ranks of which was a Soviet agent. I do not rule out that the Gestapo was afraid to report this to Hitler. Bart was taken prisoner by the British and handed over to us in 1946. He was taken to Moscow, tried and shot for treason.

A few words about the work of the Sorge ("Ramsay") group in Tokyo. The information coming through this line from the circles of Prime Minister Konoe and the statements of the German Ambassador Ott were treated with some distrust in Moscow. And the point was not only that Sorge was recruited by the subsequently repressed Berzin and Borovich, who led the Red Army Intelligence Department in the 1920s and 1930s. Even before the arrest of Borovich, the direct curator of Sorge, the latter received permission from the top leadership to cooperate with German military intelligence in Japan. He received permission, but at the same time he fell under suspicion, since such special agents are traditionally not trusted and are regularly rechecked in all special services. In 1937, the acting head of the Intelligence Agency Gendin, in his message to Stalin, emphasizing the double game of the valuable agent Sorge, who also obtained information for Ott, a resident of the German Abwehr in Tokyo, concluded that the said agent could not enjoy full confidence as a source of information.

The tragedy of Sorge was that his heroic work and the information coming from him were not used by our command. Exceptionally important data about Japan's upcoming attack on the United States, about Japan's non-alignment with the German aggression against the USSR in September-October 1941, remained in our archives. And the divisions from the Far East were transferred to Moscow in October 1941 only because Stalin did not have other reserve combat formations ready for battle. If Sorge's information was taken into account, then it did not play a significant role in the decision. From 1941 to 1945, reports that the Japanese did not intend to fight with us regularly came from our trusted agents who held the positions of adviser to the Japanese embassy in Moscow and head of the gendarmerie service of the Kwantung Army, who transmitted to us documentary data on the deployment of Japanese formations in Manchuria. Among other things, we were able to decipher the correspondence between the Japanese embassy in Moscow and Tokyo, from which it followed that the invasion of the USSR in October 1941 by Japan was not planned.

Sorge's behavior during the investigation after his arrest by the Japanese authorities caused serious irritation in Moscow. He violated the main directive of Soviet intelligence: never recognize espionage in any form in favor of the Soviet Union. Although practice

the exchange of arrested agents and intelligence officers in the 30s was very limited, nevertheless, they occasionally went for it. The Poles, for example, freed our illegal Fedichkin in 1930, the Americans - the resident of the NKVD in New York Ovakimyan in September 1941. The leadership of the Intelligence Agency, in view of Sorge's confessions, did not raise the question of his possible exchange to anyone.

By August 1942, the "Red Chapel" in Berlin, which included agents of military intelligence and the NKVD, was destroyed. But in Germany, a number of important sources of information and agents of influence survived. Some agents of the Hamburg group created by Sersbryansky and Eitingon, not connected with the Harnack-Schulze-Boysen group and settled in the Farben Industry and Thyssen concerns in the port of Hamburg, survived and went underground. The agent "Yuna", who settled in the office of Ribbentrop, escaped arrest - the German Foreign Ministry; Olga Chekhova and the Polish prince Janusz Radziwill were not compromised. However, there were no reliable liaisons with them. Our two agents, the Swedish businessman Strinberg ("Gustav") and the popular actor Carl Gerhard ("Chansonnier"), were only suitable for the role of couriers. Strinberg's trips to Germany turned out to be of little effect, and the Germans soon revealed Gerhard, since he did not hide his anti-Hitler sentiments. The agent network in France and Switzerland continued to operate.

In early 1941, Vasilevsky created a network of illegal immigrants in France. The main figure in contact with them was Colonel Schmidt, a senior member of the Abwehr cipher service. Vasilevsky learned that Schmidt had been recruited by French intelligence in the early 1930s. The French communists who helped Vasilevsky's people established that Schmidt also worked for the British secret service. The name of the English agent with whom Schmidt maintained contact in France was given to us by MacLean as early as 1939. From the nature of the materials given by Schmidt to Vasilevsky, we realized that the British regularly intercept and decipher German radio messages. The Germans tracked down Schmidt's suspicious connections and he disappeared without a trace.

Hundreds of radiograms to Moscow from the "Red Chapel" from Switzerland for the period from July 1941 to October 1943 contained the most valuable information: orders from the German high command, information about the movement of troops and a lot of operational details of the hostilities. This information was passed on by Rudolf Ressler ("Lucy"), but he stubbornly refused to name its source to the illegal Soviet resident Shandor Rado.

Rössler, a German émigré, met Rado when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. He made it clear that he considered Rado connected with Soviet intelligence, and suggested that he pass on information from German military circles. Knowing this, we decided that "Lucy" was simply trying to keep his source secret - an agent in the German General Staff.

In fact, Rössler passed on to us the information he received from the British. British intelligence knew about the work of the Rado group, since on the eve of the war they introduced their agent into the Red Chapel in Switzerland. Through diplomatic channels in London, through the British liaison mission in Moscow, the British did not transmit this information, fearing that we would not believe it and demand to name the source. We did not know then that the British had an analogue of the German Enigma cipher machine, which was assembled in 1938 for the British intelligence service by a Polish engineer who had previously worked at a German secret enterprise that produced these machines. The British kept in the strictest confidence the existence of "Enigm'y", which gave them the opportunity to decipher German radio messages. Information about her came to us in 1945 from Philby and Cairncross.

Stalin did not trust the British, and there were reasons for this. When we compared intelligence from our agents in Switzerland and from London, we saw a striking match. However, the information from London from the Cambridge group was more complete, and from the "Lucy" group, obviously edited. It was clear that Lucy's information was dosed and edited by the British intelligence services.

Our London station was periodically supplied with decrypted radiograms by John Cairncross, who worked in the British cipher center Bleachley Park. Later, in conversation with my friend Kulin - he was a resident in London from 1943 to 1947 and led the Cambridge group - we recognized that Cairncross's contribution to our common cause and the materials received from him were of great value for revealing German operational plans. The decrypted materials from Cairncross were not only of military value, but also allowed us to trace the penetration of the British intelligence service into the Rado group.

In the spring of 1943, a few weeks before the start of the Battle of Kursk, our station in London received information from the Cambridge group about the specific goals of the planned German offensive, code-named Operation Citadel. This message indicated the number of German divisions that were supposed to be used, and emphasized that Operation Citadel was aimed at Kursk, and not at Velikiye Luki, that is, not to the west, but to the south-west of Moscow - we did not expect a German offensive there. The NKVD forwarded this information to the Soviet Supreme High Command on May 7, 1943. The message from London contained more detailed and precise plans for the German offensive than those received through military intelligence from "Lucy" from Geneva. It became quite clear to the leaders of military intelligence and the NKVD that the British were giving us limited information, but at the same time they wanted us to thwart the German offensive. From this we concluded that they were interested not so much in our victory as in prolonging the fighting, which would lead to the exhaustion of the forces of both sides.

At the beginning of 1943, the head of military intelligence, General Ilyichev, sent a letter to the NKVD and to General Selivanovskiy, deputy head of military counterintelligence SMERSH, with the message that the German special services had penetrated the Red Chapel. An encrypted warning was received from an agent in Brussels, Gurevich ("Kent"): he was working under German control. It was decided to continue these radio games with the Germans. In the autumn of 1943, radio operators of the Red Chapel were arrested in Geneva and Lausanne, but we still continued to receive information from London from our resident Kulin, who had replaced Gorsky.

British intelligence has not yet acknowledged the transfer of redacted decoded information to our agent network in Switzerland. In Moscow, however, the Red Chapel has always been viewed with suspicion. Her heroic activity in Germany, France and Switzerland did not bring laurels in the eyes of the authorities to either the intelligence of the NKVD or the Intelligence Agency of the Red Army. No one treated her work as a priority, because the deciphered orders of the Germans, transmitted by the British, did not contain indisputable data based on genuine documents, but were based on oral information.

sources.

The "Red Chapel" is still considered in the West as the main source of intelligence information that came to the Soviet Union during the war years, but in fact this information was of a secondary nature for us. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that its agents acted with great courage and high professionalism, and many of them died heroic deaths. The leaders of the "Red Chapel" Trepper ("Big Chief"), Gurevich ("Little Chief", or "Kent") and Rado ("Dora") were considered traitors in the Red Army Intelligence Agency. Trepper and Rado tried to hide from the Soviet authorities; their search and sending to Moscow was carried out by the British. In Moscow, they were arrested and imprisoned in the Lubyanka.

Trepper and Rado spent ten years in prison before being released and rehabilitated in the late 1950s. In their memoirs, they presented Gurevich as a traitor, but it was he who captured, recruited and delivered to us in Moscow in 1945 the chief investigator of the Gestapo, who was involved in the case of the Red Chapel. When Gurevich was taken to the Gestapo in November 1942, he managed to send a radiogram warning

that from now on he is under the control of the Germans, and one of the instructions he received from us obliged him to continue radio games, which he did. As soon as the war ended, Gurevich managed to convince the Gestapo officer Heinz Pannwitz, who was in charge of the Red Chapel case, to make contact with us. According to Gurevich, he will be a valuable acquisition for Soviet intelligence, since he has information that allows us to identify those who sympathized with us and those who were our enemy. This, he said, would secure an amnesty for Pannwitz and a job in the Soviet security agencies. Shocked by Germany's defeat, Pannwitz accepted Gurevich's offer of a secret meeting with a Russian representative. He was detained and, together with Gurevich, was immediately taken to Moscow.

Pannwitz's revelations, however, had only limited interest in the eyes of the intelligence leadership. The wide popularity of Pannwitz in the West ruled out the possibility of using him for our active operations. Since he could report on those Gestapo informers whom we, together with British intelligence, were still looking for, it was decided not to liquidate him, but to keep him in prison. Trepper, Rado and Gurevich shared his fate: they survived only because their testimony might be needed in the future. After ten years in prison, Pannwitz was repatriated to Germany.

Since 1946, Rado and Trepper have been claiming that the failure of the Red Chapel was due to Gurevich's betrayal. After Stalin's death in 1953, I was told, Comintern veterans petitioned for the rehabilitation of Rado and Trepper. Their case was reviewed, and in 1955 they were acquitted of the charge of treason, although the Intelligence Department of the General Staff objected, bringing their own accusations against them - violation of conspiracy rules and unauthorized spending of money. Gurevich was released in 1955 under an amnesty for those who were accused of collaborating with the Germans, but was not rehabilitated.

Gurevich personally turned to Khrushchev with a request to look into his case, but the KGB and military intelligence firmly stood their ground, deliberately making him a scapegoat for the failure of the Red Chapel. According to a special certificate prepared by the heads of the KGB intelligence Sakharovsky and Korotkov, in 1958 Gurevich was arrested again. The arrest warrant was signed by Serov, who by that time had become the head of the KGB, and Prosecutor General Rudenko. Gurevich was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison, but in accordance with the new Criminal Code, this term was reduced to fifteen years. Since he had already served almost ten years, he was released after five years.

After serving the full term of imprisonment, Gurevich settled in Leningrad, where he worked as an interpreter. Every year he applied for a review of his case, but the KGB and military intelligence persisted, still opposing his rehabilitation or a new trial. In the official history of the Soviet military intelligence, prepared in the 60-70s, Gurevich is presented as a traitor, whose actions led to the failure of the "Red Chapel" in France and Germany. In the West, Gilles Perrault's book *The Red Chapel* expresses the same point of view.

In 1990, the military prosecutor's office contacted me in the case of Gurevich, who continued to insist on his rehabilitation. The prosecutor's office found a document of exceptional importance - a memo from the General Staff, sent to the NKVD with the approval of Gurevich's (Kent) radio games with the Germans. When Gurevich's case began to be reviewed, it turned out that his only fault was that he started a family in the West (in France) without the approval of the Center. However, the leadership of military intelligence continued to stubbornly prevent the restoration of his rights. After Gurevich was finally rehabilitated in 1991, the Intelligence Department of the General Staff categorically refused to pay him compensation, award a military pension and grant him the status of a war veteran.

This person is alive. His wife died in Europe, and his son, along with his wife and children, came to St. Petersburg to meet his father. The story of Gurevich went through the pages of the Russian press, but no one asked the question: whose evil will in the intelligence agencies of the USSR is everything

over the years continued to place the blame on this man.

For us, who knew that the Germans had problems with the supply of the army, Stalin's directive to stand to the end in 1941 and 1942 and stop the enemy at any cost seemed natural and reasonable. Looking back, you see that the tragic defeats of the Red Army in Belarus, the loss of millions of human lives killed and taken prisoner near Kiev were just a tactical success for the Wehrmacht. The Germans faced the prospect of a protracted war, for which they did not have the necessary resources to win.

By mid-July 1941 we received two important messages. One is on the radio Berlin, the other - from our diplomats and intelligence officers interned by the Germans in Italy and Berlin at the beginning of the war. After the exchange for German diplomats interned in Moscow, the first secretary of the Soviet embassy in Berlin, Berezhkov, and the NKVD resident Amayak Kobulov, the younger brother of Beria's deputy Bogdan Kobulov, reported that Baron Botman, who accompanied the train with Soviet diplomats expelled from Germany, hinted to them: maybe the time will come when Germany and the USSR will prefer to regulate their relations on the basis of mutual concessions.

In exhausting battles near Smolensk, the tank army of General Guderian was stopped. Disappointment grew in the German high command, caused by the insufficiently fast pace of advance of the German troops in July 1941, as reported from Berlin by Arvid Harnack ("The Corsican"). On July 25, Beria ordered me to contact our agent Stamenov, the Bulgarian ambassador in Moscow, and inform him of rumors allegedly circulating in diplomatic circles that a peaceful end to the Soviet-German war on the basis of territorial concessions was possible. Beria warned that my mission was top secret. It was understood that Stamenov, on his own initiative, would bring this information to Tsar Boris.

Beria, with the knowledge of Molotov, categorically forbade me to instruct the ambassador-agent to bring such information to the Bulgarian leadership, since he could guess that he was participating in a disinformation operation conceived by us, designed to buy time and strengthen the position of the German military and diplomatic circles, who did not leave hopes for a compromise peaceful end to the war.

As Beria testified during the investigation in August 1953, the content of the conversation with Stamenov was sanctioned by Stalin and Molotov in order to throw misinformation on the enemy and buy time to concentrate forces and mobilize available reserves.

Stamenov was recruited by our experienced intelligence officer Zhuravlev in 1934 in Rome. He worked as the third secretary of the Bulgarian embassy, sympathized with the Soviet Union and cooperated with us out of purely patriotic considerations. He was convinced of the need for a lasting alliance between Bulgaria and the USSR and regarded it as the only guarantee for the protection of Bulgarian interests in the Balkans and in the European

politics in general.

When Beria ordered me to meet with Stamenov, he immediately contacted Molotov by telephone, and I heard that Molotov not only approved this meeting, but even promised to get Stamenov's wife a job at the Institute of Biochemistry of the Academy of Sciences. At the same time, Molotov forbade Beria to meet with Stamenov himself, saying that Stalin ordered the meeting to be held by the NKVD worker with whom he was in touch, so as not to attach too much importance to the upcoming conversation in the eyes of Stamenov. Since I was the same worker, I met with the ambassador at Eitingon's apartment, and then again at the Aragvi restaurant, where our separate office was equipped with listening devices: the whole conversation was recorded on tape. I relayed to him the rumors, which frightened the British, about the possibility of a peaceful settlement in exchange for territorial concessions. By this time, it became clear that the fighting near Smolensk had become protracted and the German tank groups had already suffered heavy losses. Stamenov did not express much surprise at these rumors. They seemed to him quite reliable. According to him,

everyone knew that the German offensive did not develop in accordance with Hitler's plans and the war was clearly dragging on. He said that he was still confident in our final victory over Germany. In response to his words, I remarked:

"War is war. And maybe it still makes sense to probe the possibilities for negotiations.

"I doubt that anything will come of it," objected Stamenov.

In a word, we acted in the same way as the German side did. The conversation was a typical probing prelude. I have already mentioned that Botman, an employee of the Foreign Ministry, had similar conversations with Berezhkov.

Stamenov did not report the rumors I had told to Sofia, which we expected. We were convinced of this, since we completely controlled all the cipher correspondence of the Bulgarian embassy in Moscow with Sophia, having access to their ciphers, which we called "Bulgarian verses" among themselves. Shura Kochergina, Eitingon's wife, our experienced operative, contacted her agents in the Bulgarian diplomatic and emigre circles in Moscow and established that Stamenov had taken no steps to verify and spread the rumors we had started. But if I gave such an order to Stamenov, he, as an agent completely controlled by us, would certainly carry it out. This is how the whole story ended in late July - early August 1941.

In 1953, however, Beria was accused of preparing a plan to overthrow Stalin and the Soviet government. This plan provided for secret negotiations with Hitler's agents, who were offered a treacherous separate peace on the terms of territorial concessions. Under interrogation in August 1953, Beria testified that he acted on Stalin's orders and with the full approval of Foreign Minister Molotov.

Two weeks before the interrogation of Beria, I was summoned to the Kremlin with Stamenov's intelligence file, where I reported the details of our conversation to Khrushchev, Bulganin, Molotov and Malenkov. They listened attentively, without a single remark, but later I was accused of playing the role of Beria's liaison in an attempt to use Stamenov to make peace with Hitler. Wanting to present Beria as a German agent and compromise him, Malenkov ordered that Jehovah, the secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, be sent to Sofia together with investigators from the prosecutor's office. They were supposed to bring Stamenov's testimony to Moscow. However, Stamenov refused to give any affidavit.

True, he confirmed verbally that he was an agent of the NKVD and collaborated with Soviet intelligence in the interests of fighting fascism both in Germany itself and in the allied countries. Attempts to blackmail him, such as threats to deprive him of the pension he received from the Soviet government for his activities during the war, did not lead to anything either. According to Sukhanov, Malenkov's assistant, and my younger brother (his wife worked in Malenkov's secretariat), Pegov returned from Sofia empty-handed - no evidence, no confessions. All this was kept secret, but figured in the verdict in the Beria case and in my case.

However, in his memoirs, Khrushchev, who knew about all these details, still preferred to stick to the previous version that Beria negotiated a separate peace with Hitler, caused by Stalin's panic. In my opinion, Stalin and the entire leadership felt that an attempt to conclude a separate peace in this unprecedentedly difficult war would automatically deprive them of power. Not to mention their genuinely patriotic feelings, of which I am quite sure: any form of peace agreement was unacceptable to them. As experienced politicians and leaders of a great power, they often used for their own purposes the intelligence that came to them for probing actions, as well as for blackmailing competitors and even allies.

Thus, our agents, who had access to the entourage of the young Romanian king Mihai, sounded out the mutual interest of his court and the Soviet leadership in Romania's withdrawal from the pro-Hitler coalition. As in the case of Finland, our diplomats

prepared and formalized an agreement on Romania's withdrawal from the war against the USSR, England and the USA and on its entry into the war with Germany. This was preceded by another important event: a group of militants of the Romanian Communist Party, led by our operatives, detained the leader of the fascists, Prime Minister Antonescu, when he visited the king.

During the war years, I had to take part in the development of decisions on military questions. Particularly important in this regard were my contacts with the Chief of Staff of the Naval Forces, Admiral Isakov, and officers of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff.

In August 1942, Beria and Merkulov (Malenkov was also present at this conversation) instructed me to equip 150 climbers in just twenty-four hours for combat operations in the Caucasus. As soon as the climbers were ready to carry out the combat mission, Beria ordered me, together with him and Merkulov, to fly from Moscow to the Caucasus in several transport planes. The flight was very long. In Tbilisi, we flew through Central Asia on S-47 aircraft received from America under Lend-Lease. Our operations were supposed to stop the advance of German troops in the Caucasus on the eve of the decisive battle at Stalingrad. We made the first landing in Krasnovodsk, then in Baku, where Colonel Shtemenko, head of the Caucasian direction of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, reported on the situation. It was decided that our special unit would try to block the mountain roads and stop the advance of the enemy's elite alpine shooters.

Immediately after us, a group of experienced partisan commanders and paratroopers arrived in Tbilisi, led by one of my deputies, Colonel Mikhail Orlov. They prevented the Germans from invading Kabardino-Balkaria and inflicted heavy losses on them before the start of the upcoming offensive. At the same time, the climbers blew up oil tanks and destroyed the motorized units of the German infantry in the mountains.

Our own losses were also great, because the climbers were often not well trained militarily. Their advantage was in professionalism, knowledge of the mountainous area, as well as active support from the highlanders. Only in Chechnya the local population did not help them.

At the staff meetings in Tbilisi, chaired by Beria, the chief representative of the Headquarters, I often experienced difficulties and lost my head when it came to purely military matters. Once I tried to forward them to Shtemenko and said that I was incompetent in military strategy and tactics. Beria cut me off: "Military questions must be seriously studied, Comrade Sudoplatov. You should not say that you are incompetent. You will be sent to study at the military academy after the war." After the war, I really entered the academy and in 1953, on the eve of my arrest, I graduated from it.

Very heavy fighting took place in the North Caucasus in August and September 1942, when I was there. Our special unit mined oil wells and drilling rigs in the Mozdok region and blew them up at the moment when German motorcyclists approached them. Merkulov and I made sure that the explosion took place strictly on orders, and joined our sabotage group, retreating to the mountains, at the last moment. Later, we received a message from our decryption group from Sweden: the Germans were unable to use the oil reserves and wells of the North Caucasus, which they counted on very much.

However, the scolding we suffered for successful actions remained in my memory for a long time. When we returned to Tbilisi, Beria reported that Stalin had reprimanded Merkulov, Beria's deputy, for taking an unjustified risk in carrying out a mining operation: he was putting his life in danger and could be captured by the German advance units. Beria attacked me for allowing this. During the German raids, several officers from the Headquarters, who were in the Caucasus, were killed. Politburo member Kaganovich was seriously wounded in the head during the bombing. Admiral Isakov was also wounded, and one of our most experienced Georgian Chekists, Sadzhaya, died in

the time of this flight.

Fears that Tbilisi and the entire Caucasus could be captured by the enemy were real. My task was to create an underground intelligence network in case Tbilisi was under the Germans. Professor Konstantin Gamsakhurdia (father of Zviad Gamsakhurdia) was one of the candidates for the post of head of the intelligence network in Georgia. He was the oldest informer of the NKVD. He was also attracted to cooperation by Beria after several arrests in connection with anti-Soviet statements and nationalist separatism that were incriminated to him. Ironically, before the war, he was known for his pro-German sentiments: he made it clear to everyone that the prosperity of Georgia would depend on cooperation with Germany. I wanted to verify these rumors, and with Beria's consent, together with Sajaya, I had a conversation with Professor Gamsakhurdia at the Intourist Hotel. He didn't seem very reliable to me. In addition, all his previous experience as an informant was to inform on people, and not to influence them. And one more thing: he was too busy with his work. (By the way, he wrote a biography of Stalin in Georgian.) In general, he was a man prone to intrigues and tried in every possible way to take advantage of Beria's location: both were Mingrelians.

After conferring with local workers, we came to the conclusion that Gamsakhurdia would be better used in a different role. The main role was assigned to Machivariani, a playwright who had a reputation in Tbilisi as a respectable person. He was known to be an uncompromisingly honest man, and we calmly entrusted him with large sums of money, as well as gold and silver items, which, if necessary, could be used for the needs of the underground.

Much later, one of my cellmates, Academician Sharia, Beria's assistant, who was in charge of party propaganda in Georgia, told me that Beria subsequently lost all interest in Gamsakhurdia. Tog, however, remained a very influential figure in Georgia - a kind of icon in the world of culture. It is known that Stalin personally forbade his arrest. In 1954, when Beria had already been shot, the Georgian authorities wanted to get rid of Gamsakhurdia, and the local KGB applied to Moscow for a sanction for his arrest as Beria's accomplice, who had made himself political capital through cash connections with an enemy of the people. As the writer Kirill Stolyarov, who studied the events of 1953-1954, told me, they wanted to accuse Gamsakhurdia of blackmailing representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia on Beria's instructions, forcing them to establish secret ties with the German secret service. It was for this, his accusers argued, that he received during the war years from Beria and Mikoyan large sums of money and the American "jeep".

According to Sharia, in the end, Gamsakhurdia was left in the hay: as far as I know, he died a natural death in Tbilisi in the 70s. His son became the first president of independent Georgia, was overthrown in 1992 and reportedly committed suicide in late 1993.

In 1953, Beria was also accused of damaging our defenses during the battle for the Caucasus. At the same time, Shtemenko was dismissed from the army for his connection with Beria. But they did not begin to promote Shtemenko's guilt in the interests of the ruling elite. Marshal Grechko, then Deputy Minister of Defense, fought in the Caucasus under Beria during the war. It is clear that the accusations against Beria would have hit the top military leadership like a boomerang. That is why, in the press release, the sentence against Beria did not include charges of treason during the battle for the Caucasus.

Sajaya died during the bombing, and Shtemenko did not mention good relations with me, so I was not interrogated in connection with the defense of the Caucasus in the Beria case. Later, my investigators generally lost interest in this, although I had to hear from them remarks that I had undeservedly received the medal "For the Defense of the Caucasus", since, together with Beria, I was engaged in deceiving the Soviet government.

After the defeat of the Germans near Stalingrad, in early 1943, Moscow came to life. one for

theaters began to open to others. This indicated that a turn for the better had taken place at the front. My wife with small children, Andrei and Anatoly, returned from Ufa, where she was evacuated and worked as a teacher at the Higher School of the NKVD. We temporarily settled in the Moskva Hotel, since the heating in our house did not work; a few months later we moved into a small house - only nine apartments - in a side street near the Lubyanka.

At the time I am writing about, Moscow was closely following the novel of the famous Soviet poet Konstantin Simonov and the no less famous actress Valentina Serova. Their marriage was not particularly happy, and after the war Simonov divorced Serova. My wife and I met this couple several times in the specialty canteen. Ilyin, the Commissar of State Security, who oversaw the "cultural front", complained: he had few other things to do, so he still had to personally answer for Simonov's safety! Simonov was an extremely dashing driver and, taking advantage of his privileged position, allowed himself whatever his heart desired. In addition, he was on good terms with Vasily Stalin, known for his addiction to alcohol and dashing adventures.

Ilyin told me about Stalin's reaction (it is now widely known) to the collection of Simonov's lyrical poems "With You and Without You", published in 1942 and in the full sense of the word, shocking the reading public, dedicated to Valentina Serova. His popularity was such that it was impossible to get a book.

At that moment, Stalin was seriously worried about his daughter Svetlana's passion for the screenwriter Kapler. His films "Lenin in October" and "Lenin in 1918" enjoyed great success at that time. Svetlana was only sixteen, and he was already over thirty. Later, Beria was accused of organizing the beating of Kapler on the street. If this really happened, then he could do this only on the orders of Stalin. Before my arrest, I knew nothing about it. As for Kapler himself, in the end he was arrested and sent to the Gulag for seducing minors and distributing

anti-Soviet jokes.

Operations Berezino and Monastery were the most important radio games. Initially, the operation "Monastery" was developed by our group and the Secret Political Directorate of the NKVD, and then from July 1941 in close cooperation with the GRU. The purpose of the operation "Monastery" was our penetration into the intelligence network of the Abwehr operating on the territory of the Soviet Union. To this end, we quickly created a pro-German anti-Soviet organization seeking contacts with the German high command. Despite the thorough purges of the 20s and 30s, many representatives of the Russian aristocracy remained alive; however, they were all under surveillance, and some became our important informants and agents.

Analyzing the materials and composition of the agents placed at our disposal by the counterintelligence of the NKVD, we decided to use as a bait a certain Glebov, the former leader of the noble assembly of Nizhny Novgorod. By that time, Glebov was already over seventy. This man was famous in the circles of the former aristocracy: it was he who welcomed the royal family in Kostroma in 1915 on the occasion of the solemn celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty. Glebov's wife was her man at the court of the last Russian Empress Alexandra Feodorovna. In a word, of all the surviving representatives of the Russian nobility, Glebov seemed to us the best candidate. In July 1941, almost a beggar, he huddled in the Novodevichy Convent.

Of course, he did not know even the most elementary basics of intelligence work. Our plan was that Glebov and a second man, also of a noble family (he was our agent), would gain the confidence of the Germans. Our agent, Alexander Demyanov ("Heine"), and his wife, also an NKVD agent, visited the church of the Novodevichy Convent on the pretext of receiving a blessing before sending Alexander to the front in the cavalry unit. Most of the servants of the monastery were secret informers of the NKVD. During a visit to the church, Demyanov was introduced to Glebov. There was a heart-to-heart between them.

relationship; Demyanov showed an avid interest in the history of Russia, while Glebov had nostalgia for the past. Glebov valued the company of his new friend, and he began to bring to meetings with him other people who sympathized with Glebov and were eager to get to know him better. These were either trusted representatives of the NKVD, or operational officers. Each of these meetings was organized by Maklyarsky, who personally supervised the agent Demyanov.

Alexander Demyanov really belonged to a noble family: his great-grandfather Galovaty was the first ataman of the Kuban Cossacks, and his father, an officer in the tsarist army, died the brave in 1915. Demyanov's uncle, his father's younger brother, was the head of counterintelligence for the White Guards in the North Caucasus. Captured by the Chekists, he died of typhus on his way to Moscow. Alexander's mother, a graduate of the Bestuzhev courses, a recognized beauty in St. Petersburg, was widely known in the aristocratic circles of the former capital. She received and turned down several invitations to emigrate to France. She was personally known by General Ulagai, one of the leaders of the White Guard emigration, who actively collaborated with the Germans from 1941 to 1945. Alexander's own childhood was marred by images of terror - both white and red - that he had to watch during the civil war, when his uncle fought under the command of Ulagai.

After his mother refused to emigrate, they returned to Petrograd, where Demyanov worked as an electrician: he was expelled from the Polytechnic, where he entered, keeping silent about his past (at that time it was impossible for him to receive a higher technical education due to non-proletarian origin). In 1929, the GPU of Leningrad, on the denunciation of his friend Ternovsky, arrested Alexander for illegal possession of weapons and anti-Soviet propaganda. In fact, the gun was planted. As a result of the action, Alexander was forced into tacit cooperation with the GPU. Due to his origin, he was aimed at developing connections between the nobles who remained in the USSR with foreign white emigration and suppressing terrorist attacks. By the way, in 1927, Alexander witnessed the explosion of the House of Political Education by white terrorists in Leningrad. Alexander began to work for us, using family connections.

Soon he was transferred to Moscow, where he got a job as an electrical engineer at Mosfilm. At that time, the cultural life of the capital centered around the film studio. Pleasant appearance and noble manners allowed Demyanov to easily enter the company of film actors, writers, playwrights and poets. He shared his room in a communal apartment in the center of Moscow with an actor from the Moscow Art Theater. We managed to arrange for him a rather rare thing for those times - from now on he had his own horse in the Manege! Naturally, this circumstance expanded his contacts with diplomats. Alexander was friends with the famous Soviet director Mikhail Romm and other prominent cultural figures. The NKVD allowed an elite group of artistic intelligentsia and representatives of the former aristocracy to lead a secular lifestyle without any restrictions, but some of these people were recruited, and the rest were carefully monitored in order to be used in the future if necessary.

Demyanov was "led" by Ilyin and Maklyarsky. He was not used as a petty informant, his task was to expand the circle of acquaintances among foreign diplomats and journalists - regulars at the hippodrome and theatrical premieres. The appearance of Demyanov in the society of actors, writers and directors was so natural that he easily managed to make the necessary connections. He never concealed his origin, and this could be easily verified in the émigré circles of Paris, Berlin and Belgrade. In the end, Demyanov became seriously interested in the employees of the German embassy and the Abwehr.

On the eve of the war, Alexander reported that an employee of the German trade mission in Moscow, as if in passing, mentioned several names of people close to the Demyanov family before the revolution. Instructed accordingly by Ilyin

Demyanov did not show any interest in the words of the German: it was a clear attempt to start recruiting him, and in these cases one should not show excessive interest. Perhaps, from that moment on, he appeared in the operational records of German intelligence under some code name. Later, as can be seen from the memoirs of Gehlen, the chief of intelligence of the General Staff of the ground forces, he was given the name "Max".

The first contact with German intelligence in Moscow radically changed his fate: from now on, a special mark appeared in his intelligence business, put by Maklyarsky. This meant that in the event of a war with the Germans, Demyanov could become one of the main figures that the German secret services would be interested in. By the beginning of the war, Alexander's agent experience totaled almost ten years. Moreover, it was about serious counterintelligence operations, when he had to contact people who did not think to hide their anti-Soviet convictions. At the very beginning of the war, Alexander signed up as a volunteer in the cavalry unit, but he was destined for a different fate: he became one of the most valuable agents placed at my disposal for special assignments. In July 1941, Gorlinsky, head of the Secret Political Directorate of the NKVD, and I turned to Beria for permission to use Demyanov, together with Glebov, to carry out Operation Monastery behind enemy lines. To give credibility to Operation Monastery, the poet Sadovsky and the sculptor Sidorov were involved in it, who at one time studied in Germany and were known to the German special services, their apartments in Moscow were used for secret communications.

As I already mentioned, our idea was to create an active pro-German underground organization Throne, which could offer its assistance to the German high command, provided that its leaders receive appropriate posts in the new anti-Bolshevik administration in the occupied territory. We hoped in this way to identify German agents and infiltrate the German intelligence network in the Soviet Union. The undercover files of "Throne" and "Monastery" quickly swelled, turning into multi-volume ones. Despite the fact that these operations were initiated and approved by Beria, Merkulov, Bogdan Kobulov and others, subsequently repressed high-ranking employees of the state security agencies, they remain a classic example of high-level professionalism, entered textbooks and are taught in special schools, of course, without reference to real the names of the agents and operational workers involved in this operation.

The radio game, originally planned as a means of identifying individuals who collaborated with Germans, actually grew into a confrontation between the NKVD and the Abwehr.

After careful preparation, Demyanov ("Heine") crossed the front line in December 1941 as an emissary of the anti-Soviet and pro-German organization Prestal. The German front group of the Abwehr reacted to the defector with obvious distrust. Most of all, the Germans were interested in how he managed to ski on a mined pale. Alexander himself was unaware of the danger and miraculously survived. He was interrogated for a long time, demanded to report on the deployment of troops on the front line, then a staged execution was staged in order to force him, under pain of death, to confess to collaborating with Soviet intelligence. Having achieved nothing, Alexander was transferred to Smolensk. There, he was interrogated by Abwehr officers from the "Valli" headquarters. Distrust began to dissipate gradually. They believed Demyanov after they made inquiries about him among the Russian emigration, and made sure that before the war he was not involved in intelligence operations conducted by the OGPU-NKVD through Russian emigrants. The Germans knew that the Russian emigration was stuffed with NKVD agents, who acted very effectively: many emigrants willingly cooperated with us out of patriotic considerations and a sense of guilt before their homeland. The ego made it possible to nullify all attempts by the white emigration to carry out terrorist attacks and organize sabotage. In addition, it turned out that before the war, Abwehr agents came into contact with him, developed him as a source, and in the Berlin dossier he appeared under the code name "Max".

Abwehr made a bet on "Max".

Alexander completed a course of study at the Abwehr school. The only difficulty for him was to hide that he knew how to work on the radio and knew the cipher business. The Germans were literally delighted that they had recruited such a capable agent. This also facilitated our work, since it could be thrown to our rear without a radio operator.

Now the Germans set specific tasks for Demyanov ("Max"): he had to settle in Moscow and create, using his organization and connections, an agent network in order to infiltrate the headquarters of the Red Army. His tasks also included the organization of sabotage on the railways.

In February 1942, the Germans parachuted "Max" into our territory along with two assistants. They chose the wrong time for this: in a snowstorm, all three lost each other and traveled from Yaroslavl to Moscow one by one. Alexander contacted us and quickly got used to the duties of a resident of German intelligence. Both assistants were soon arrested. The Germans began to send couriers to contact "Max". We made most of these couriers double agents, and some were arrested. In total, we detained more than fifty agents of the Abwehr sent to communicate.

Alexander, as a scout, had the full support of his family, which was a great success for us. The details of his intelligence activities were known to his wife and father-in-law. Breaking the rules, we went for it for a simple and reasonable reason that seemed to us. She concluded as follows.

His wife Tatyana Berezantsova worked at Mosfilm as an assistant director and enjoyed great prestige among film and theater figures. Father-in-law, Professor Berezantsov, was considered a medical god in Moscow academic circles and was a leading consultant in the Kremlin clinics. He, one of the few specialists of this level, was allowed to practice privately. Berezantsov was also well known in the diplomatic corps, which was very important for us. At the time, he was in his fifties, highly educated, and spoke excellent German (he was educated in Germany), French, and English. His apartment was used as a safe house for the underground organization Throne, and later for contacts with the Germans. The NKVD understood that the Germans could easily check who lived in this apartment, and it seemed natural that the whole family, whose roots went back to the past of Tsarist Russia, could be involved in an anti-Soviet conspiracy.

At my suggestion, the first group of German agents were to remain at large for ten days so that we could check their appearances and find out if they had they have connections with someone else besides Alexander ("Max"). Beria and Kobulov warned me that if this group staged a sabotage or terrorist attack in Moscow, I would not lose my head.

Alexander's wife dissolved special pills in tea and vodka, treated the German agents in her apartment, and while they were sleeping under the influence of sleeping pills, our experts managed to neutralize their hand grenades, ammunition and poisons. True, part of the ammunition had a remote control, but experts believed that in general these agents were disarmed. Such operations at Alexander's apartment were a very risky business: the "guests", as a rule, were distinguished by excellent physical data and several times, despite the pills, unexpectedly woke up ahead of time.

We allowed some German couriers, especially those from the Baltic states, to return to the Abwehr headquarters on the condition that they report on the successful activities of the German intelligence network in Moscow.

In accordance with the legend developed by us, we arranged Demyanov for the post of junior communications officer in the General Staff of the Red Army. As we developed fictitious sources of information for the Germans among the former officers of the tsarist army who served under Marshal Shaposhnikov, the entire operation turned into an important channel of disinformation. The radio game with the Abwehr became more and more intense. In the middle of 1942, Fischer-Abel was entrusted with the radio technical support of the game.

Meanwhile, Demyanov managed to create the impression that his group had carried out a diversion

on the railway near Gorky. To confirm the act of sabotage and to strengthen reputation of Alexander, we organized several reports in the press about sabotage in railway transport.

In the German archives, Operation Monastery is known as The Case of Agent Max. In his memoirs Service, Gehlen praises the role of Agent Max, the main source of strategic military information about the plans of the Soviet Supreme High Command during the most difficult years of the war. He even reproaches the Wehrmacht command for ignoring the timely messages transmitted by "Max" via radio transmitter from Moscow about the counteroffensive of Soviet troops. We must pay tribute to the American intelligence services: they did not believe Gehlen and in a number of publications directly indicated that German intelligence fell into the trap of the NKVD. Gehlen, however, continued to adhere to his point of view, according to which the work of "Max" was one of the most impressive examples of the success of the Abwehr during the war years.

The head of intelligence of the German security service, Walter Schellenberg, in his memoirs, claims that valuable information came from a source close to Rokossovsky. At that time, "Max" served in Rokossovsky's headquarters as a communications officer, and the marshal commanded the troops of the Belorussian Front. According to Schellenberg, an officer from Rokossovsky's entourage was anti-Soviet and hated Stalin for being repressed in the 1930s and spending two years in prison.

The prestige of "Max" in the eyes of the leadership of the Abwehr was really high - he received the "Iron Cross with Swords" from the Germans. We, in turn, awarded him the Order of the Red Star.

Alexander's wife and her father for the risk in performing the most important tasks were awarded with medals "For Military Merit".

From the materials of the German archives it is known that the Wehrmacht command made several fatal mistakes, partly due to the fact that it completely relied on information from the Abwehr received from sources from the Soviet Supreme High Command. The disinformation transmitted by "Heine" - "Max" was prepared in the Operational Directorate of our General Staff with the participation of one of its leaders, Shtemenko, then endorsed in the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff and transferred to the NKVD in order to ensure its receipt by convincing circumstances. According to Shtemenko's plan, the important operations of the Red Army were indeed carried out in 1942-1943 where they were "predicted" by the days of the Germans "Heine" - "Max", but they had a distracting, auxiliary value.

Disinformation was sometimes of strategic importance. So, on November 4, 1942, "Heine" - "Max" reported that the Red Army would strike the Germans on November 15 not near Stalingrad, but in the North Caucasus and near Rzhev. The Germans were waiting for a blow near Rzhev and repelled it. But the encirclement of the Paulus group near Stalingrad came as a complete surprise to them.

Unaware of this radio game, Zhukov paid a heavy price - thousands and thousands of our soldiers under his command were killed in the offensive near Rzhev. In his memoirs, he admits that the outcome of this offensive operation was unsatisfactory. But he never found out that the Germans had been warned about our offensive in the Rzhev direction, so they threw so many troops there.

The disinformation of "Heine" - "Max", as follows from the memoirs of Gehlen, also contributed to the fact that the Germans repeatedly postponed the offensive on the Kursk Bulge, and this was in the hands of the Red Army.

Part of the information that went to Berlin came back to us from the Germans. That's how it was. In 1942-1943, for a short time, before his exposure, Colonel Schmit, one of the leaders of the Abwehr cipher service, collaborated with us. He handed over to our people in France intelligence materials received by the Abwehr from Moscow. We analyzed them, and it turned out that it was our own disinformation,

transmitted by "Gaines" - "Max".

We received one of the ciphers three times. The first time - from France through Schmitt, in February 1943. The second time was in March 1943 from Anthony Blunt (Cambridge group), who served in British intelligence: he informed Gorsky, our resident in London, that the Germans in Moscow had an important source of information in military circles. Third time - In April 1943, the British, through our intelligence communications mission in London, transmitted the same message, allegedly intercepted by British intelligence in Germany. In fact, the British received this information with the help of the Enigma decryption machine and presented it to us in a greatly truncated form, which they practiced in the future. The German high command used the information transmitted by "Heine" - "Max" to orient the officers of their combat units in the Balkans. British intelligence intercepted these messages sent from Berlin to the Balkans, so that we ended up getting our own data from Blunt, Cairncross and Philby. This proved that our disinformation works. In Switzerland, the British intelligence service, as I have already mentioned, gave the edited texts of the intercepts, deciphered using Enigm'a, to their agent, who was in contact with Rössler, who, in turn, transmitted this information to the Red Chapel, from where it came to Center. And so we had two versions, born initially of our disinformation transmitted by "Max".

In February 1943, we received from London a modified version of Demyanov's message to Berlin, along with an indication that German intelligence had its own source of information in the military circles of Moscow. Later, through our resident in London, Chichayev, the British intelligence service warned us: there is reason to believe that the Germans in Moscow have an important source through which military information leaks. We understood that we are talking about Alexander.

It should be noted that the operation "Monastery" with the participation of "Heine" - "Max" was conceived as purely counter-intelligence. Indeed, when he returned to Moscow in 1942 as a resident of German intelligence, we captured more than 50 enemy agents with his help. However, the operation later took on the character of a strategic disinformation radio game.

In addition to Operation Monastery, our service during the war led approximately eighty disinformation radio games with the Abwehr and the Gestapo.

In 1942-1943, we finally managed to seize the initiative in radio games with German intelligence. This was due to the fact that we introduced reliable agents into the Abwehr schools of intelligence saboteurs thrown into our rear near Smolensk, in the Ukraine and in Belarus. Our successful operation to intercept saboteurs is recorded in the letter file "School". Having recruited the head of the passport bureau of the training center in Katyn, we received installations for more than 200 German agents abandoned in our rear. All of them were either neutralized or forced to cooperate.

Then bureaucratic intrigues began between the military counterintelligence SMERSH, the NKVD and the leadership of military intelligence. Abakumov, head of SMERSH, unexpectedly came to my office and declared that, at the direction of the Soviet Supreme High Command, I should hand over to him the entire manual on radio games: this business should be handled by military counterintelligence, which is under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Defense, and not the NKVD. I agreed, but on the condition that there is an order from a higher authority. A day later, such an order appeared, we were left with two radio games: Operation "Monastery" and "Novices" (another radio game to misinform the Germans). Abakumov was extremely dissatisfied, because he knew that the results of these operations were reported directly to Stalin.

Operation Novices was carried out under the guise of an anti-Soviet religious underground, as it were, existing in Kuibyshev, supported by the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. According to legend, this underground was headed by Bishop Ratmirov. He worked under

control of Zoya Rybkina in Kalinin, when the city was in the hands of the Germans. With the assistance of Bishop Ratmirov and Metropolitan Sergius, we managed to introduce two young NKVD officers into the circle of churchmen who collaborated with the Germans in the occupied territory. After the liberation of the city, the bishop moved to Kuibyshev. On his behalf, we sent them from Kuibyshev under the guise of novices to the Pskov Monastery with information to the abbot, who collaborated with the German invaders. Both novices were known to the Germans.

The Germans sent radio operators to Kuibyshev from among Russian prisoners of war, whom we quickly managed to recruit. In the meantime, two of our "novice" officers launched a vigorous activity in the monastery. There were quite a few NKVD agents among the church ministers, which overshadowed their work. The Germans were sure that they had a strong spy base in Kuibyshev. Maintaining regular radio contact with their intelligence bureau near Pskov, they constantly received false information from us about the transfer of raw materials and ammunition from Siberia to the front. Having reliable information from our agents, we at the same time successfully resisted the attempts of the Pskov clergy, who collaborated with the Germans, to appropriate the authority to lead the parishes of the Orthodox Church in the occupied territory.

The materials prepared by us about the patriotic position of the Russian Orthodox Church, its consolidating role in the growing anti-fascist movement of the Slavic peoples in the Balkans, and Roosevelt's unofficial probing requests to improve the political and legal position of the Orthodox Church, transmitted through Harriman to Stanin, obviously convinced him to meet the allies and lead along attitude towards the church less rigid policy. Stalin took an unexpected step: he allowed the elections of the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church to be held.

The position of patriarch was abolished by Peter the Great as soon as church hierarchs began to oppose his reforms. This situation continued for almost two hundred years, until 1917. After the overthrow of the monarchy in Russia, the Provisional Government allowed the Orthodox Church to hold elections for a patriarch. They became Tikhon. After his death, the Soviet government did not allow the election of a new patriarch, and only during the Great Patriotic War, when Stalin realized the importance of the church for rallying the people, in 1943, the patriarch of all Rus' was elected. My wife and I attended the enthronement ceremony.

By order of Stalin, Bishop Ratmirov was awarded a gold watch after the war and medal.

After Abakumov failed to subdue the radio games "Monastery" and "Novices", he warned me threateningly:

"Remember, I won't forget this. I have decided not to have any future with you.
cases!"

The confrontation between Abakumov and Beria was also difficult at that time. Throughout the war, Stalin was the people's commissar for defense. Under him, military counterintelligence (SMERSH) was transferred from the NKVD to the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Defense, and Abakumov was approved as the head of SMERSH, on the recommendation of Beria. Thus, while holding this position, Abakumov became Stalin's deputy as People's Commissar for Defense, which significantly increased his status and gave direct access to the Master. Now he was virtually independent of Beria and turned from a subordinate into his rival. In 1943, without the sanction of Beria, Abakumov arrested the Commissar of State Security Ilyin, an experienced head of the third department of the Secret Political Directorate of the NKVD, who was in charge of working with the creative intelligentsia. Under rules only abolished under Gorbachev, no one had the right to arrest a high-ranking official without the consent of his superiors. There were, however, exceptions, but each time they were considered as an emergency. The arrest warrant was signed by the prosecutor, but in the lower left corner it must have had the sanction of the immediate superior of the person who was arrested: "Agreed" - and

signature. As I said, there was no Beria's sanction in this case.

Soft, with professorial manners, Ilyin enjoyed great respect in the NKVD. For five years, before Operation Monastery began, he "led" Demyanov and also participated in this radio game with the Germans at its initial stage. In 1937-

In 1938, he escaped arrest, although he was a senior operative, since at that time he was responsible for working with the Mensheviks, who were no longer of interest to Stalin. At the end of 1938, Beria sent him to Orel and Rostov to investigate the case of the so-called Trotskyist sabotage on the railways. It was believed that the conspirators had infiltrated the ranks of the local leaders of the Soviet and party organs. He returned to Moscow, shocked by the primitiveness of the false accusations that he had to face, and reported to his superiors that the Oryol and Rostov NKVD simply fabricated cases in order to strengthen their own position and strengthen their reputation. After his presentation, the case was reviewed, and Ilyin was appointed to the post of head of the third department of the Secret Political Directorate of the NKVD, which allowed him to arrest two important informants who supplied us with deliberately false information about supposedly anti-Soviet sentiments among senior officials.

Ilyin summoned informants to Moscow and ordered them to provide detailed information on the cases of the two suspects. Having received their information, he was convinced that during the years of repression they had perfectly learned the art of slandering those whom they were developing. The falsifying informants were arrested and sentenced to ten years in the camps, and with such people, he Ilyin was an Honorary Chekist. Considering Ilyin's personal contacts received an award - a sign from writers such as Alexei Tolstoy, and famous musicians and composers, he was often hosted by Beria. Ilyin was also on friendly terms with Merkulov.

And in 1943, Ilyin's service in the authorities ended due to a conflict with Abakumov. Even during the civil war, Ilyin became friends with Teplinsky, with whom they served together in the cavalry unit. Later, Ilyin began working in the OGPU, and Teplinskiy switched to aviation and made a good career: in 1943 he was a major general and was appointed to the post of head of the inspectorate of the Air Force headquarters.

Unexpectedly, Teplinsky's promotion slowed down: it turned out that the authorities objected to his new appointment. Then he turned to Ilyin, trying to find out what was the matter. Tom managed to quickly find out: the only reason that forced the state security to refuse trust in Teplinsky was his presence at a party at the Military Academy in 1936, before Tukhachevsky's arrest, where he allegedly allowed himself to speak with praise about the officers and generals who soon fell victims of repression in army. Ilyin warned Teplinsky to be more careful in his statements, but made his warning over the phone.

Abakumov immediately found out about their conversation and, indignant, demanded from Beria that he remove Ilyin from work. Beria instead instructed Merkulov to confine himself to a simple suggestion, moreover, in a friendly tone. By that time, relations between Abakumov and Beria had deteriorated greatly. Abakumov decided to take advantage of this story in order to compromise Beria and Merkulov. He reported to Stalin that Commissar of State Security Ilyin was disrupting the SMERSH operational check of the command staff of the Red Army Air Force in connection with new appointments. All this was of particular importance, since one of the reasons that prompted Stalin to transfer SMERSH under his personal control was that he wanted to exclude any interference of the Beria NKVD in matters of official movement in the army. Stalin ordered Abakumov to immediately arrest Teplinsky. Even during the war years, Stalin still strove to personally control the work of the departments he headed at all costs. In this case, it was about a particularly important department - the People's Commissariat of Defense.

During the interrogation, conducted with prejudice (Abakumov knocked out two of his front teeth on the very first night), Teplinskiy admitted that Ilyin advised him on how best to behave in order not to give grounds for accusations of sympathy for the enemies of the people. In addition, he also

admitted that he shared with Ilyin his sympathies for a number of senior officers who were arrested in 1938. A week later, Abakumov reported the confessions of the arrested person personally to Stalin and received from him a sanction for the arrest of Ilyin.

Appearing to Merkulov at Lubyanka, Abakumov demanded that Ilyin be summoned, let me remind you that he was talking about a senior employee of the People's Commissariat, the Commissar of State Security. And this man is disarmed and put in the inner prison of Lubyanka. Although the prison belonged to the NKVD, the Chekists were deprived of the right to interrogate Ilyin, since he was under the jurisdiction of SMERSH. The next day, Abakumov arranged a confrontation between Teplinsky and Ilyin. Teplinskiy, who had been beaten the day before, repeated his "confessions"; Ilyin, outraged, slapped him in the face, calling him a woman.

Having not found witnesses to corroborate Teplinsky's testimony, Abakumov found himself in a difficult position: after all, it was necessary to enlist the testimony of two witnesses. Since none of Teplinsky's entourage in the military elite even knew about the existence of Ilyin and could not testify against him, it seemed problematic to find a second witness for the prosecution, and without this it was impossible to transfer the case for hearing to the Military Collegium. Ilyin was beaten, deprived of sleep, but he not only refused to plead guilty, but did not even sign the interrogation protocols. To formalize the case, they had to be presented to Stalin so that he would decide the further fate of the person under investigation, and Abakumov was afraid to appear before Stalin without a convincing indictment. Although Abakumov could not prove Ilyin's guilt, he still remained in prison.

Ilyin was summoned for interrogation for four years from 1943 to 1947. He was kept in solitary confinement and periodically elected to obtain confessions. Four years later, they gave up on him, but for another five years he remained in prison, where at various times his cellmates were the Minister of Aviation Industry Shakhurin, Air Marshal Novikov and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania. Ilyin did not tell anyone that he was a Chekist officer. According to him, he worked in the technical department of a documentary film studio. Realizing that he was a victim of the struggle for power, Ilyin promised himself not to admit to anything and it would be better to die than to tarnish his honor. He even managed to keep a sense of humor. One day he asked his interrogator, who was conducting the interrogation:

- And what does the ribbon on your chest mean?

The officer replied that it was the Order of Lenin. Ilyin remarked:

- That's what an honor was given to me - the case was entrusted to a person who was awarded the order Lenin. So my work is very important!

In July 1951, Ilyin was transferred to Matrosskaya Tishina and placed in a special block of the prison of the Central Committee of the Party. The Committee of Party Control, which investigated the cases of members of the Central Committee and state security officers, dealt with the persons under investigation there. The head of the prison warned him of serious consequences if he did not admit his guilt before the party. The new investigator, who appeared at the next interrogation in the uniform of a major general of justice, was the deputy military prosecutor of the Soviet Union, Kitaev. To Ilyin's immense surprise, Kitaev demanded that he testify about the traitorous activities of Abakumov, in response, Ilyin asked for evidence that this was not a provocation. The guard led him out into the corridor and pushed him to the peephole of the cell, where the sworn enemy of Ilyina Abakumov was sitting.

Nevertheless, Ilyin refused to testify against Abakumov, far-sightedly reasoning that Abakumov had once reported everything to Stalin, and if he, Ilyin, now tells about the cases fabricated by Abakumov, then he could be accused of facilitating these crimes. Ilyin testified that in his work after 1933 he had no contact with Abakumov, only occasionally met him at the Lubyanka, and also during an inspection trip to Rostov in 1938. Kitaev was dissatisfied with his statement and transferred Ilyin back to the Lubyanka, where interrogations immediately resumed. However, their tone became completely different. Now he was accused of misunderstanding his

call of duty, maintaining contacts and friendships with suspicious people. Six months later, the head of the Commandant's Office of the Ministry of State Security (MGB), Major General Blokhin, announced to him: for service omissions, the Special Meeting sentenced Ilyin to nine years in prison.

The term of imprisonment has expired - Ilyin served nine years. Before his release, he was offered to go to the office **to** complete the necessary documents. Ilyin told me that Blokhin was not only the head of the commandant's office, but was also responsible for carrying out death sentences (in a number of cases he carried them out himself), therefore, when he was called to Blokhin, in one or two seconds, mentally scrolled in front of him his whole life. He was sure that now, this very minute, he would be taken to the commandant's office to be shot. However, he was taken to a regular office, where he signed a non-disclosure agreement regarding the circumstances of the case and the conditions of detention. He received a certificate of release, a temporary passport and his old uniform of the commissar of state security, now a major general, without shoulder straps, which over the years has become rather dilapidated.

Released late in the evening, without money, Ilyin decided to take refuge in the reception of the MGB on Kuznetsky Most. He knew that the war was over, but did not know how it had changed people's lives: he did not know that a monetary reform had taken place in the country and completely different money was in circulation. He also didn't know where his family was or what happened to them. In the morning it turned out that his wife had divorced him, because she had no information about him and believed that he was dead. She remarried and their daughter lived with her.

Ilyin tried to contact Merkulov, who became Minister of State Control. He came to the ministry, the secretary reported to Merkulov, and then said that the name of Ilyin did not mean anything to the minister. He had nowhere to go. He again returned to the reception of the MGB and made an attempt to call Shubnyakov, his former deputy.

He did not know his phone number and did not have a coin to call from the machine, so he dialed his old number using the internal phone in the MGB reception. The duty officer answered, who recognized him and spoke to him with obvious sympathy: Ilyin's reputation was still high among the veterans of the NKVD. It turned out that Shubnyakov was arrested in 1951, following Abakumov. An officer from the reception of the MGB lent Ilyin five hundred rubles (then it was quite a large amount) and advised him to immediately leave Moscow.

Ilyin went to Ryazan, where his cousin lived. There he got a job as a loader at the railway station. On his arrival in the city, he reported to the local department of state security on the railway, and two months later they helped him get the position of foreman of loaders. True, they demanded that he tell his workmates that he was convicted not under a political article, but for embezzlement and other official crimes, and they promised to make a corresponding entry in the work book. But Ilyin refused, fearing that he might be accused of hiding his past. So at the age of forty-eight he began a new life.

After Stalin's death, he applied for rehabilitation. The first petition was rejected, but he was allowed to return to Moscow. Ilyin got a job in the transport department of the Moscow City Council. He was rehabilitated in 1954 after the execution of Beria and my arrest. For a year, he was denied the full pension due to state security officers. Serov opposed this, stating that Ilyin was compromised by his connection with Teplinsky, who was still serving his term as an enemy of the people.

Three days after my release from prison in 1968, Ilyin visited me. I learned that fate again smiled at him. In 1956, his former curator at the Central Committee became deputy head of the department of culture of the Central Committee of the party. He needed an honest and experienced administrator for the post of organizing secretary of the Moscow branch of the Writers' Union. Ilyin's previous work experience, a former commissar of state security for culture, made him a suitable candidate for the post. In addition, he was supported by such writers as Fedin and Simonov. The party leadership needed

The Writers' Union is a person who would know everyone, including informers. Ilyin ideally suited his new position and worked in the Writers' Union until 1977. He died in 1990.

In 1944, Operation Monastery began to develop in a new direction. On the eve of the summer offensive of the Red Army in Belarus, Stalin summoned the head of the intelligence department Kuznetsov, the head of the military counterintelligence SMERSH Abakumov, the People's Commissar of State Security Merkulov and me. My mood was high: our work was going well, and a month ago Eitingon and I were awarded the Order of Suvorov for military operations in the German rear. As a rule, this high award was given only to the commanders of front-line units for winning battles, and the fact that this time it was awarded to state security officers spoke volumes. That is why I went to the meeting with a sense of confidence, and Merkulov was in excellent shape and spirit, as one of the curators of the "Monastery" operation.

However, Stalin received us very coldly. He reproached for not understanding the realities of war and asked how, in our opinion, "Monastyr" and other radio games could be used to assist our army in offensive operations, and suggested expanding the scope of radio games, noting that the old techniques did not fit the new environment. Kuznetsov proposed to plant new information through "Heine" - "Max" about the allegedly planned offensive in Ukraine. I was not prepared for this turn of the conversation and knew absolutely nothing about the plans of the Soviet Supreme High Command. In addition, I remembered the advice of Marshal Shaposhnikov never to get involved in matters that are outside your competence. That is why I was silent when Abakumov resumed his attempts to subdue Operation Monastery to SMERSH, declaring that his apparatus had closer ties with the General Staff than the NKVD.

Stalin summoned General Shtemenko, Chief of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff, who read out the order prepared before our conversation. In accordance with the order, we had to mislead the German command, creating the impression of active operations in the rear of the Red Army of the remnants of German troops who were surrounded during our offensive. Stalin's plan was to trick the Germans into using their resources to support these units and "help" them make a serious attempt to break through the encirclement. The scope and boldness of the proposed operation made a great impression on us. I experienced excitement and at the same time anxiety: the new task went beyond the scope of the previous radio games in order to misinform the enemy.

On August 19, 1944, the General Staff of the German Ground Forces received a message from "Max" sent by the Abwehr that a unit under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Scherhorn, numbering 2,500 people, was blocked by the Red Army in the area of the Berezina River. Thus began the operation "Berezino" - the continuation of the operation "Monastery".

Operation "Berezino" was developed by the head of the third department of the 4th department, Colonel Maklyarsky, I supported the idea of the operation. A tempting radio game was planned with the German high command. In pursuance of the instructions of the Stavka, its plan was reported personally to Stalin, Molotov, and Beria. The operation was approved.

For the direct management of this operation to the scene in Belarus Eitingon, my deputy Maklyarsky, Fischer, Serebryansky and Mordvinov left.

In reality, the Sherhorn group did not exist in the rear of the Red Army. The German formation under the command of this officer, numbering 1,500 people, defending the crossing on the Berezina River, was defeated by us and taken prisoner. Eitingon, Maklyarsky, Fisher, Mordvinov, Gudimovich and T. Ivanova with the active participation of "Gaines" - "Max" recruited Sherhorn and his radio operators. Soldiers and officers of a special-purpose brigade were sent to Belarus, along with them German anti-fascist Comintern members arrived. The game also involved German prisoners of war recruited

Soviet intelligence. Thus, the impression was created that there was a real German group in the rear of the Red Army. So, from August 19, 1944 to May 5, 1945, we played perhaps the most successful radio game with the German high command. However, the operational workers who participated in the Berezino operation were not awarded either then, or in subsequent years, or on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Victory, although they were presented for the award.

The German security service and the general staff of the German ground forces were seriously plotting to disrupt the rear communications of the Red Army using the Scherhorn compound. To this end, Sherhorn, in response to his requests for help, was sent sabotage specialists and equipment. At the same time, we managed to capture a group of SS militants sent to communicate with Sherhorn.

Sherhorn sent to Berlin reports on sabotage in the rear of the Red Army, written by Eitingon, Maklyarsky and Mordvinov. "Max" received an order from Berlin to check the accuracy of Scherhorn's reports about actions in the rear of the Red Army - he fully confirmed them. Hitler promoted Sherhorn to colonel and awarded him the Knight's Cross, while Guderian sent a personal congratulation. Sherhorn was ordered to break through the front lines and advance into Poland and then into East Prussia. Sherhorn demanded that Polish guides collaborating with the Germans be dropped by parachute to support this operation. Berlin agreed, and as a result, we captured Polish agents of German intelligence. Hitler, for his part, planned to send the head of the special operations and sabotage service Skorzeny and his group, but the Germans had to abandon this plan due to the worsening military situation on the Soviet-German front in April 1945.

On May 5, 1945, shortly before the end of the war, the command of the Wehrmacht and the Abwehr in their last telegram recommended Sherhorn to act according to the circumstances. "Max" was ordered to mothball sources of information and break off contacts with German officers and encircled soldiers who were threatened with capture, return to Moscow, hide and try to maintain their connections. We interned Sherhorn and his group near Moscow, where they were until they were released in the early 50s.

It is noteworthy that Gehlen, who headed German military intelligence after Canaris, in an effort to win the confidence of the Americans, offered "Max" as a reliable source after the war. However, US intelligence was distrustful of Gehlen's proposal.

A great merit in carrying out operations "Monastyr" and "Berezino" belongs to the head of the department, Massya, who in 1945-1950, together with his wife, actively participated in intelligence work on the atomic problem in the United States.

I had a plan to use Scherhorn to recruit the German Admiral Raeder, Commander of the Naval Forces, who had been removed from his duties by Hitler in 1943. While in captivity, Raeder was in Moscow. Later, at his request, his wife came to Moscow. He seemed determined to cooperate with us in exchange for a promise not to charge him as a war criminal at the Nuremberg trials, although the British side insisted on bringing him to trial for operations by German submarines against the British fleet and unarmed merchant ships.

I settled him with his wife at my dacha, but soon became convinced that my plan of influencing the admiral through Sherhorn was unrealistic, since they turned out to be incompatible with each other. He had a more beneficial effect on Admiral Serebryansky, who was at my dacha under house arrest as a "prisoner of war" (he played the role of a German businessman). Serebryansky managed to convince the admiral to renew his acquaintances and connections in Germany. Raeder, I remember, really liked walking along the Moskva River in a captured Horch limousine - that's exactly what he had in Germany.

At the end of 1945 we sent Raeder to Germany. The British side continued to insist on bringing him to trial as a war criminal. As far as I remember, we reached an agreement with the British and Americans on this issue. Raeder, several other senior officers of the German Navy and another group of officers were transferred to the allies in exchange for the former tsarist general Krasnov, who commanded the Cossack army in the civil war, and served in the Wehrmacht headquarters in World War II, and Soviet officers who fought in Vlasov's army. Sherhorn was also returned to Germany and my contacts with these people were cut off.

After the war, we made an attempt to engage Alexander Demyanov ("Heine"—"Max") again, this time in Paris, but it soon became clear that the emigrant circles there showed no interest in him, and he and his wife returned to Moscow. Neither he nor his wife participated in any other intelligence operations. Demyanov later worked as an electrical engineer in a research institute. He died in 1975 from a heart attack while boating on the Moscow River. He was sixty four years old.

Both military and political intelligence played an important role in the preparation and conduct by our country of the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences, meetings and meetings of the foreign ministers of the states of the anti-Hitler coalition in 1943-1945. The meeting between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill in Tehran and Yalta was preceded by informal conversations in which Fitin and I participated, on the one hand, and the head of the American military mission in Moscow, General Dean, US Ambassador Harriman, Counselor of the British Embassy Roberts, on the other. We discussed possible approaches to resolving controversial issues: the exchange of intelligence information, the mutual extradition of failed agents and captured German military specialists, the delicate problems of a possible post-war settlement in the countries of Eastern Europe. Harriman, in particular, did not object to the idea of a coalition government in post-war Poland proposed by Stalin and Molotov.

These last meetings with representatives of American and British intelligence, as it were, summed up the results of cooperation between the Allied intelligence services during the war years. It turned out to be most effective in Afghanistan, where our intelligence resident Alakhverdov managed to paralyze the actions of German agents in the border areas. Together with the British, the sabotage network of German and Japanese intelligence in India and Burma was defeated. Highly appreciating our support for British intelligence operations in India and Burma, the British, in turn, handed over to us many pro-German agents in Afghanistan and Central Asia, recruited by the Germans for operations in our rear.

Things did not go longer than general discussions about joint sabotage operations against the Germans in Western Europe with the British and American special services. However, we established business contacts with British intelligence officers operating under the headquarters of Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia. Lieutenant Colonel Kvashnin established good personal relations with Churchill's son Randolph and provided great assistance to the British officers in getting out of the German encirclement. The information received from Kvashnin was of great importance in assessing the intentions of the British ruling circles and in their post-war policy in Yugoslavia.

American business circles showed interest in possible forms of solving the Jewish question, offering financial assistance in restoring the areas of Gomel in the so-called "Jewish Settlement" and the Crimea, where it was supposed to create a Jewish republic. In informal conversations with Harriman, held at the Aragvi restaurant and recorded on a tape recorder, our agent of influence, Prince Janusz Radziwill, the Harriman family's partner in financial transactions in Poland and Eastern Europe, acted as my interpreter. He was again arrested by the NKVD in Poland in January 1945.

On the eve of the Yalta Conference, chaired first by Golikov and then by Beria, the longest meeting of intelligence leaders in the entire war took place.

People's Commissariat of Defense, Navy and NKVD-NKGB. The main issue - the assessment of the potential capabilities of the German armed forces to further resistance to the allies - was considered within two days. Our predictions that the war in Europe would last no more than three months due to the lack of fuel and ammunition among the Germans turned out to be correct. The last, third day of the meeting was devoted to comparing the available materials on the political goals and intentions of the Americans and the British at the Yalta Conference. We all agreed that both Roosevelt and Churchill would not be able to oppose our delegation's line of strengthening the positions of the USSR in Eastern Europe.

We proceeded from reliable information that the Americans and the British would take a flexible position and make concessions in view of the interest of the Soviet Union's speedy entry into the war with Japan. The forecast of the NKVD and military intelligence about the low ability of the Japanese to withstand powerful attacks by our mobile formations bypassing the fortified areas built by the Japanese along the Soviet border was confirmed in August 1945. However, we did not foresee, despite detailed reports of the completion of the atomic bomb, that the Americans would use nuclear weapons against Japan.

On the eve of the Potsdam Conference, our assessments were even more optimistic. Beria and Golikov did not mention at all the prospects for the socialist development of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania. The socialist choice as a reality for us in the countries of Europe was more or less clear only for Yugoslavia. We proceeded from the fact that Tito, as the leader of the state and the Communist Party, relied on real military force. In other countries, the situation was different. At the same time, we agreed that our military presence and the sympathy of the broad masses of the population for the Soviet Union would ensure a stable stay in power in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary of governments that would be guided by a close alliance and cooperation with us.

Our military-political recommendations on Germany were also far from directives for the construction of socialism in the zone we occupied. Rather, it was a matter of creating a powerful, stable, Russia-oriented, progressive group in the German leadership in a future neutral, permanently disarmed Germany.

The practical result of the decisions of our meeting was also an instruction to the deputy head of the 1st (intelligence) department of the NKGB Korotkov to agree with representatives of the intelligence services of the United States and England on the issuance of the command staff of the Vlasov army, in particular Zhilenkov, in exchange for the transfer to the British and Americans of the German generals they were interested in and admirals: it was also about Grand Admiral Reder, who was in captivity with us in Moscow.

... I focused only on the main intelligence operations of the German-Soviet war, the issues of assessing intelligence materials by the military-political leadership of the Soviet Union. It must be admitted that systematic attention to intelligence work began to be paid under the influence of our serious setbacks at the beginning of the war. Before the war, Stalin, evaluating the materials that came to him, relied more on his own vision of the development of events and his own intuition. In retrospect, it is obvious that the most significant results were achieved by us not on the basis of the implementation of pre-war agent positions in Western Europe and Germany, but as a result of actions prepared and carried out already during the war. At the same time, the key to success in operations for strategic disinformation of the enemy was the close interaction of military intelligence and the NKVD and the involvement of qualified top-level specialists from the General Staff. All this contributed to the fact that materials about such operations, for example, about the radio game "Monastery", are now used by the American and our special services as educational materials.

Of course, it would be wrong to imagine that we had continuous achievements. The Abwehr and the Gestapo inflicted serious damage on the intelligence agencies of the NKVD and the People's Commissariat of Defense. In addition to the death of valuable agents and operatives in Western Europe in 1941-1943, we

lost as a result of the actions of German counterintelligence the leaders of our residencies in Smolensk, Kyiv, Odessa, Kherson, Nikolaev, the main largest cities that found themselves in the zone of occupation. Among the dead were prominent members of Soviet intelligence: Kaminsky - one of the founders of the "Red Chapel" in Germany, Kudrya - resident in Smolensk and Kyiv, Molodtsov - in Odessa, Lyagin (on the eve of the war, deputy head of the intelligence department of the NKVD) - in Kherson and Nikolaev. I wrote about Kaminsky - he shot himself while trying to arrest.

In 1942, Friedgut, the famous recruiter of Grigulevich, died in Afghanistan. Together with Alakhverdov, he carried out an operation to neutralize German agents. Viktor Lyagin, abandoned behind enemy lines, was captured by the Germans and shot: without betraying anyone, he refused to run, as he would have to leave his wounded radio operator. Ivan Kudrya (my wife trained him) infiltrated the Abwehr intelligence network and passed important information to Moscow before he was betrayed. Vladimir Molodtsov was captured by the Romanians. The trial of him and his group received much publicity. The entire Romanian press wrote about this process. When he and the members of the group were sentenced to death, the chairman of the court suggested that they appeal to the King of Romania for a pardon. Molodtsov answered: he would never ask for mercy from the enemy and would not make such a request to the head of a foreign state, whose soldiers trample our land. In my opinion, Lyagin, Molodtsov, Kuznetsov after the war was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Before my arrest, I made sure that their families received regular help and support from the state security agencies.

Operatives Z. Zarubina and A. Kuprin personally took care of the families of the dead Chekists in the difficult war and post-war years. We helped them with clothes, food, placement of children for study.

Partisan officers Morozov, Kolesnikov⁶, underground workers Geft, Gordienko and many others were presented for the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The participants in Operation Berezino and the fallen heroes of the Norwegian Resistance did not receive their awards. But it is our sacred duty to pay tribute to all the dead intelligence officers, partisans and anti-fascists, those who were not properly marked during the war and the post-war years.

The end of the war still lives in my memory as a grandiose event that immediately washed away all my doubts about the wisdom of the country's leadership. The heroic and tragic events of the past, human losses and even mass repression - all this seemed justified in the face of the Great Victory over Hitler. I remember a big reception in the Georgievsky Hall of the Kremlin, where I was honored to sit at the same table with Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Shtemenko, Head of the NKVD Intelligence Directorate Fitin, Chief of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff General Ilyichev, Chief of Army Intelligence Colonel General Kuznetsov. I remember how Stalin came up to our table, greeting Isakov, who lost his leg during the German bombing in 1942 in the Caucasus, and made a toast in his honor. Isakov could not go out in front of such an audience on crutches, and we were all touched to the core by Stalin's gesture. We felt like his children and heirs. Stalin's emphasis on young generals and admirals showed that he connected the future of the country with our generation.

ATOMIC ESPIONAGE

In 1943, the world-famous physicist Niels Bohr, who fled from German-occupied Denmark to Sweden, asked the prominent scientists who were around to Elisabeth Meitner

and Alfvén to inform Soviet representatives and scientists, in particular Kapitsa, that the German physicist Heisenberg had visited him and said that the issue of creating atomic weapons was being discussed in Germany. Heisenberg invited the international scientific community to abandon the creation of these weapons, despite pressure from governments. I do not remember whether Meitner or Alfvén met in Gothenburg with a TASS correspondent and our intelligence officer Kosy and told him that Bohr was concerned about the possible creation of atomic weapons in Nazi Germany. Similar information from Bohr, even before his flight from Denmark, was received by British intelligence. Western scientists highly appreciated the scientific potential of Soviet physicists, they were well aware of such prominent scientists as Ioffe, Kapitsa, and they sincerely believed that by providing information to the Soviet Union about atomic secrets and by joining forces, they could overtake the Germans in creating an atomic bomb.

Back in 1940, Soviet scientists, having learned about rumors circulating in Western Europe about working on super-powerful weapons, took the first steps to identify the possibility of creating an atomic bomb. However, they believed that the creation of such weapons was theoretically possible, but hardly feasible in practice in the near future. The Commission of the Academy of Sciences for the Study of the Problems of Atomic Energy, chaired by Academician Khlopin, a specialist in radiochemistry, nonetheless recommended that the government and scientific institutions follow the scientific publications of Western experts on this problem. Although the government did not allocate funds for atomic research, the head of the scientific and technical intelligence department of the NKVD, Kvasnikov, sent an orientation to residencies in Scandinavia, Germany, England and the United States, obliging them to collect all information on the development of a "superweapon" - a uranium bomb.

Great success in this priority area of our intelligence activities was achieved after we sent Zarubin ("Cooper") to Washington as a resident - under the cover of the post of secretary of the embassy "Zubilin" -

together with his wife Lisa, an intelligence veteran.

Stalin received Zarubin on October 12, 1941, on the eve of his departure for Washington. Then the Germans were near Moscow. Stalin told Zarubin that his main task next year was our political influence on the United States through agents influence.

Until that time, intelligence work to collect political information in America was minimal, since we had no conflicting interests with the United States in the geopolitical sphere. But at the beginning of the war, the Kremlin was very concerned about the data from the United States that American government circles were considering the possibility of recognizing the Kerensky government as the legitimate power in Russia in the event of the defeat of the Soviet Union in the war with Germany, and the Soviet leadership realized the importance and necessity of obtaining information about intentions American government, as the US participation in the war against Hitler was of great importance.

Zarubin had to create a large-scale and effective undercover intelligence system not only to track events, but also to influence them. However, intelligence materials from England, the USA, Scandinavia and Germany on the development of atomic weapons that arrived at the Center over a year and a half changed the direction of our efforts radically.

Less than a month before Zarubin's departure, the British diplomat MacLean, our verified agent from the Cambridge group, who at that time worked under the pseudonym "List", reported documented data that the British government was paying serious attention to the development of a bomb of incredible destructive power based on the action of atomic energy.

Since 1939, I have been in charge of intelligence operations involving the use of the famous Cambridge Coy group, including the Philby and McLean developments. In July 1939 I decided to renew my contacts with McLean, Philby, Burges, Cairncross and Blunt, although they could be discovered by Alexander Orlov, who had fled to the West.

When France was defeated in June 1940, MacLean, who worked at the British Embassy in France, returned to London to work at the Foreign Office. In London, he acted under the operational direction of the resident Gorsky (one of his pseudonyms is "Vadim").

On September 16, 1941, the British War Cabinet - as the Cabinet of Ministers was called during the war - considered a special report on the creation of a uranium bomb within two years. The project for the uranium bomb was called "Tube Alloy". Enormous funds were allocated to the large British concern Imperial Chemical Industries for these works. McLean gave us a sixty-page report from the British War Cabinet discussing this project.

Our other source, an agent from Imperial Chemical Industries, said that the management of the concern is considering the issue of an atomic bomb only in theoretical terms. At the same time, we learned that the British Chiefs of Staff also decided to build an atomic bomb plant. Gorsky, our resident in London, urgently asked the Center to examine the materials sent to us.

Initially, scientists gave a negative conclusion on these materials. Since our scientists considered the question of atomic weapons only as a theoretical possibility, we were not surprised that the information on the uranium bomb was contradictory.

Our intelligence activities in the United States at that time were aimed at countering Germany and Japan. Heifetz, a resident in San Francisco, tried to recruit agents in the United States for later use in Germany, but did not achieve significant results, since he had connections mainly in the Jewish communities of the American Pacific coast.

Kheifetz and Zarubin were tasked with neutralizing the anti-Soviet activities of white emigration in the United States, represented by such figures as Kerensky, the former prime minister of the Provisional Government, and Chernov, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, expelled from Russia by Lenin's decree in 1922.

The fact is that we began to receive assistance through lend-lease, and it was extremely important to create the most favorable impression of our country in the eyes of the Americans, especially since the Roosevelt government reacted very painfully to criticism of its ties with the Soviet Union, heard in Congress and in the newspapers. We sought to identify the extent to which this criticism was inspired by white emigration.

However, all this faded into the background when Kheifets and our operative Semyonov reported that the American authorities intended to involve prominent scientists, including Nobel Prize winners, in the development of a top secret problem, and for this purpose the government allocates twenty percent of the total amount of expenses for military research. Heifetz also said that the prominent physicist Oppenheimer and his colleagues, connected with the illegal network of the US Communist Party, were leaving California and leaving for a new place to carry out work on the creation of an atomic bomb.

Until February 1942, I served as deputy head of foreign intelligence and remember these reports. They contained exceptionally important information that contributed to changing our skeptical attitude towards the atomic problem.

The decision of the Americans to allocate such large sums to the atomic project during this dangerous period of the war for the Allies convinced us that it was of vital importance and could actually be carried out.

Heifetz and Oppenheimer first met in December 1941 in San Francisco at a fundraising meeting to help refugees and civil war veterans in Spain. Kheifetz attended this meeting in his capacity as Soviet Vice Consul. He spoke English, German and French well and was an outstanding personality. Back in the 1930s, as a deputy resident in Italy, he

noticed and began the primary development of Fermi and his young student Pontecorvo, who stood out for their anti-fascist views and could become sources of scientific and technical information.

I met Kheifets in the 1930s, when he came to Moscow, and immediately fell under his charm, which was combined with the high professionalism of a scout. Kheifets worked for some time as Krupskaya's secretary. His father was one of the founders of the US Communist Party when he worked in the Comintern. While illegal in Germany, Heifetz graduated from the Polytechnic Institute in Jena and received an engineering degree. Heifetz, as a Jew, risked his head in Germany, but his dark skin allowed him to use false papers from an Indian refugee student studying in Germany.

Heifetz moved in various circles in San Francisco, was highly respected by the communists and the left (they called him "Mr. Brown"). He told me that he met Oppenheimer and his wife twice for a cocktail party. By that time, Heifetz had already heard rumors about the start of work on a superbomb, but Moscow still doubted the importance and urgency of the atomic problem.

At the same time, Heifetz reported that Oppenheimer mentioned a secret letter from Albert Einstein to President Roosevelt in 1939, in which he drew his attention to the need for research to create new weapons in connection with the threat of fascism.

Oppenheimer was disappointed that the government's quick response to the letter Einstein did not follow and that work is unfolding slowly.

An experienced professional, Heifetz knew perfectly well how to win over Oppenheimer. There was no question of offering him money, resorting to threats or blackmail using compromising materials. Through personal charm, he established a trusting relationship with Oppenheimer through his brother Frank, discussing the difficult situation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the threat of fascism hanging over the world.

In the traditional sense, Oppenheimer, Fermi and Szilard were never our agents. Kvasnikov, who headed the Soviet scientific and technical intelligence in 1947-1960, also asserted this: "The scientists who worked with our intelligence could not be called agents."

Heifetz's information was extremely important. The Center instructed Semyonov (codename "Twain") to check the messages received from Heifetz. Semyonov had to identify the main scientists involved in the work on the top-secret project, and determine the specific role of each.

Semyonov came to the state security agencies in 1937. He was one of the few who had a higher technical education, and he was sent to study in the USA, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in order to be later used in the line of scientific and technical intelligence. He operated effectively as an operative under the direct supervision of Ovakimyan, who worked under the guise of the Soviet foreign trade firm Amtorg in New York. It was Semenov and his assistant Kurnakov who managed to establish strong contacts with physicists close to Oppenheimer from Los Alamos who worked in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s and had connections in Russian and anti-fascist emigration in the United States. Thus, the main channel for information on the atomic bomb began to operate regularly. It was Semyonov who attracted the Cohens, who acted as couriers, to cooperate. Lona Cohen gave us in 1945 the most important scientific materials on the design of the atomic bomb.

Semyonov, using his connections at MIT, identified which prominent scientists were involved in the so-called Manhattan Atomic Bomb Project, and, independently of Heifetz, reported in the spring of 1942 that not only scientists but also the American government were showing serious interest in this project. Semenov also reported that a well-known specialist in

explosives Kistyakovsky, a Ukrainian by nationality.

We immediately gave instructions to use agents among the Russian emigrants to secure approaches to Kistyakovsky. However, our two important agents in the United States - the former general of the tsarist army, Yakhontov, married to the sister of the wife of the USSR People's Commissar of State Security Merkulov, who emigrated to the United States after the Civil War, and Sergei Kurnakov, a veteran of the GPU emigration operations in the United States, were unable to attract Kistyakovsky.

For some time, Semyonov was in touch with the spouses Julius and Ethel Rozenberga, attracted to cooperation with our intelligence service by Hovakimyan in the 30s. The scientific and technical information of the Rosenbergs was not significant - they and their relatives were a safety net, far from the main operations. Later, their arrest and trial attracted worldwide attention.

Semyonov probably played the main role in creating a channel for the receipt of intelligence information on the atomic bomb, through which in 1941-1945 we received, as Terletsky writes in his memoirs, American secret reports, and also English materials describing the main experiments to determine the parameters of nuclear reactions, reactors, various types of uranium boilers, diffusion separation plants, diary entries on atomic bomb tests, and the like.

In March 1942, McLean provided us with documentary evidence of intensive work on the atomic problem in England. In the same year, Fuchs was recruited by Soviet military intelligence to cooperate.

Important events have also taken place in our country. In May 1942, Stalin received a letter from a young physicist, specialist in nuclear reactions, the future Academician Flerov, who drew attention to the suspicious absence of open scientific publications on the uranium problem in the foreign press since 1940, and this, in his opinion, testified to the beginning of work on the creation of atomic weapons in Germany and other countries. Flerov warned that the Germans might be the first to create an atomic bomb. And I (at that time I was organizing the partisan movement and collecting intelligence information on Germany and Japan) was instructed to find out everything about atomic developments in Germany.

Information from agents received in business and industrial circles in Sweden was contradictory. In Germany and Scandinavia, rumors stubbornly circulated about the work of the Germans on the "superweapon", but we did not know any details about these works. Only after the war did it become clear that the "superweapon" meant a two-stage rocket based on the V-2 model, which could reach the coast of the United States.

Information on the atomic bomb, received from the United States and England, coincided. It was confirmed when we received a message about the possibility of creating an atomic bomb from the words of the prominent nuclear physicist Elisabeth Meitner. Meitner has been on the radar of our intelligence ever since the question arose in 1938 of the possibility of her coming to the Soviet Union to work. Then she had to flee Nazi Germany to Sweden, where Niels Bohr helped her get a job at the Physics Institute of the Academy of Sciences. The agents of the women who came out to Meitner were instructed by the deputy resident of the NKVD in Stockholm, Zoya Rybkina, at the behest of Beria.

In March 1942, Beria sent Stalin all the information received from the United States, England and Scandinavia. In the letter, he indicated that scientific work was underway in America and England to create atomic weapons.

In February 1943, when the British secret services conducted a sabotage operation in Vemork (Norway), where there was a heavy water plant needed for a nuclear reactor, Stalin believed that the nuclear project was gaining real content. We were informed about the details of the sabotage by our sources in Norway, Philby and the Cambridge group from London. I did not attach much importance to these reports, because the damage from her seemed insignificant to me, and was surprised when Beria ordered me to take note

this operation. Naturally, he was alarmed that, despite the agreement with the British on the joint use of our agent groups in Scandinavia, Western Europe and Afghanistan for major sabotage and sabotage operations, the British did not ask us to support their raid in Vemork. This indicated that the British attached special importance to the sabotage operation in Norway.

Until the beginning of 1943, we did not carry out any practical work in the field of creating an atomic bomb. Even before the German attack, the State Commission for Military Industrial Research rejected proposals from young nuclear physicists at the Institute for Physical and Technical Research in Kharkov and from the German émigré scientist Lange to begin work on the creation of a super-powerful explosive device. The proposal was sent to the department of inventions of the People's Commissariat of Defense, but it was considered premature and was not supported.

In March 1942, Beria suggested to Stalin that a scientific advisory group of prominent scientists and senior officials be created under the State Defense Committee to coordinate the work of scientific organizations for the study of atomic energy. He also asked Stalin for permission to acquaint our prominent scientists with information on the atomic problem, obtained through secret agents, in order to evaluate it. Stalin gave his consent and proposed that several scholars, independently of each other, give an opinion on this issue.

On the problem of creating an atomic bomb in the near future, Academician Ioffe and his young student Professor Kurchatov, on the one hand, who were acquainted with intelligence materials, spoke out, on the other hand, Academician Kapitsa (he was informed orally about the work on the atomic bomb in the USA, England and Germany) .

Ioffe was involved in research on atomic energy on the advice of Academician Vernadsky. He was known to Western scientists because in the 1920s and 1930s he made study trips to the laboratories of Western Europe and the USA. In 1934, while in Belgium, Ioffe turned down an offer to go to work in the USA, although at that time the contradictions between physicists in our scientific circles sharply escalated. Moscow and Leningrad scientists clashed especially sharply. An irreconcilable position towards the Ioffe school was taken, in particular, by some influential professors of Moscow University. This went on for over a year. (I remember how a Moscow professor said to me: "Pavel Anatolyevich, why are you consulting these figures from the Leningrad Institute of Physics and Technology? This is a gang!") Ioffe appreciated the enormous importance of information about atomic research in America and supported the need to start work on creating Soviet atomic bomb. Subsequently, Ioffe played a prominent role in settling conflicts between scientists at Moscow University and the Academy of Sciences, and he was one of the initiators of the creation of three main centers for atomic research shortly after the war.

Kapitsa believed that the problem of creating an atomic bomb posed a challenge to modern physics and its solution was possible only through the joint efforts of our scientists and scientists from the USA and England, where fundamental research on atomic energy is being carried out.

I was told that in October 1942, at his dacha in Kuntsevo, Stalin received only Vernadsky and Ioffe. Vernadsky, referring to an informal agreement between the world's leading physicists on joint work, suggested that Stalin turn to Niels Bohr and other scientists who emigrated to the United States, as well as to the American and British governments, with a request to share information with us and work together on atomic energy. To this, Stalin replied that scientists are politically naive if they think that Western governments will provide us with information on weapons that will make it possible in the future to dominate the world. However, Stalin agreed that the official probing approach to Western specialists or the name of our scientists could

turn out to be useful.

After this meeting, as Vannikov, People's Commissar of Munitions, one of the leaders of the atomic program, later told me, for the first time the country's leadership was finally convinced

in the real possibility of creating atomic weapons, and Stalin was so fascinated by the powerful destructive potential of the atomic bomb that at the end of October 1942 he proposed that the plan of our counteroffensive near Stalingrad be given a code name - Operation Uranus. In all his ideas and proposals, he always had this inner motive, incomprehensible to his interlocutors.

On the basis of information from London from a source in the Imperial Chemical Industries concern, which played an important role in the English Pipe Alloy project, Stalin ordered Pervukhin, People's Commissar for the chemical industry, to give the most serious support to scientists in the work on creating atomic weapons.

A year has passed. Kapitsa, informed by the NKVD in 1943 about the beginning of work in the United States and Germany on atomic weapons, several times turned to Stalin and Beria with proposals to invite Bohr to head our atomic program. In agreement with Molotov, he wrote a letter to Bohr, in which he asked him to come to the Soviet Union, where he was guaranteed the best conditions for work. While Bohr was in England, he was invited to the Soviet embassy, where he met Gorsky, an NKVD resident who was working undercover. the post of adviser to the embassy, but during the conversation Bohr avoided discussing issues of atomic research.

At the end of January 1943, information was received from Semenov ("Twain") that in December 1942 in Chicago, Fermi carried out the first nuclear chain reaction. Our source, as far as I remember, the young Pontecorvo, reported the phenomenal success of Fermi with the conditional phrase: "The Italian navigator reached the New World." However, this information was of the most general nature, and a few months later Kurchatov requested additional materials on the first nuclear reaction.

At the same time, Barkovsky handed over from London closed scientific works of Western scientists on atomic energy for 1940-1942. These first scientific materials confirmed that Western scientists had made great progress in building the atomic bomb.

Thus, we had at our disposal not only verbal reports, but also the minutes of the discussion at meetings of the British War Cabinet of the prospects for using atomic energy to create super-powerful weapons.

In 1943, Vasilevsky was appointed resident in Mexico City. He was quite suitable for this job: he had experience of the war in Spain, where he commanded a subversive partisan detachment; he successfully carried out undercover operations in 1939-1941 in Paris; he adapted to life in the West, was always well dressed, smart, spoke French and Spanish, had an extraordinary ability to win over people and attract cooperation under a convenient pretext. Vasilevsky managed to restore ties with agents in the United States and Mexico, attracted by Eitingon and Grigulevich to carry out the operation to eliminate Trotsky.

In 1939-1941, during his stay in the United States, Eitingon was granted an emergency right to recruit and involve people in cooperation without the sanction of the Center, using family ties. Vasilevsky knew this agency, since he was one of the active participants in the operation in Mexico. Before leaving for Mexico, he received special permission to use these people. Through these channels, mothballed for some time, Vasilevsky established contact with Pontecorvo in Canada and some specialists from the Chicago Fermi Laboratory, bypassing our residency in New York. Pontecorvo told Vasilevsky that Fermi was positive about the idea of sharing information on atomic energy with scientists from the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition.

On February 11, 1943, Stalin signed a government decree on the organization of work on the use of atomic energy for military purposes. Molotov headed this business. At the same time, it was decided, in view of the importance of the atomic problem, to make it a priority in the activities of the NKVD intelligence. Beria initially acted as Molotov's deputy and was responsible for providing the military and scientists with intelligence information. I remember how he ordered me to introduce Joffe,

Kurchatov, Kikoin and Alikhanov with scientific materials obtained undercover, without disclosing the sources of information.

Kikoin, after reading the report on the first nuclear chain reaction, was unusually excited and, although I did not tell him who carried it out, he immediately reacted: "This is the work of Fermi. He is the only scientist in the world who can create such a miracle." I had to show them some of the original materials in English. In order not to disclose specific sources of information, I covered with my palm that part of the document where the signatures were and the sources were listed. The scientists said excitedly: "Listen, Pavel Anatolyevich, you are too naive. We know who in the world of physics is capable of what. You give us your materials, and we will tell you who their authors are." Ioffe immediately named the author Frisch based on other materials. I immediately reported this to Beria and received permission to disclose to Ioffe, Kurchatov, Kikoin and Alikhanov the sources of information.

In April 1943, a special laboratory No. 2 on the atomic problem was created at the USSR Academy of Sciences, with Kurchatov appointed its head. He was barely forty years old. It was a bold decision. But we knew that the American atomic project was headed by 44-year-old Oppenheimer, who did not have the title of Nobel laureate. Our older physicists could not believe that Bohr and Fermi were working under Oppenheimer. Already in December 1943, on the direct orders of Stalin, Kurchatov was elected a full member of the Academy of Sciences.

Having received from the NKVD a report on the first nuclear chain reaction carried out by Fermi, Kurchatov turned to Pervukhin with a request to instruct the intelligence agencies to clarify a number of important questions about the state of atomic research in the United States. In this regard, the activities of the intelligence services of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the NKVD were reorganized. For five years, in 1940-1945, scientific and technical intelligence was carried out by special units and departments of the Red Army Intelligence Department and the First Directorate of the NKVD of the NKGB, of which I was deputy head until February 1942. In 1944, it was decided that the NKVD would coordinate the activities of intelligence on the atomic problem. In this regard, under my leadership, a group "C" (Sudoplatov's group) was created, which later, in 1945, became an independent department "C". In addition to coordinating the activities of the Intelligence Department and the NKVD in collecting information on the atomic problem, the group, and later the department, were entrusted with the functions of implementing the data received within the country. A great deal of work on the processing of incoming scientific and technical information on the atomic bomb was carried out by the employees of Department "C" Zoya Zarubina, Zemskov, Massya, Groznova, Pokrovsky. Zarubina and Zemskov, as far as I remember, under the direction of Terletsky translated the most important materials on the design of nuclear reactors and the atomic bomb itself. By that time, Zoya Zarubina had extensive experience in operational and translation work, participated in the events of the Yalta and Potsdam Allied conferences in 1945. According to the decision of the government, department "C" became the working apparatus of Bureau No. 2 of the Special Committee of the Government of the USSR on "problem No. 1". Qualified specialists and scientists who worked in the department regularly reported on the intelligence materials they received at meetings of the committee and the scientific and technical council, which was headed by the People's Commissar for Ammunition Vannikov.

Kurchatov and the scientists of his group often visited Beria, discussing the organization of work in accordance with the information received from the NKVD. In fact, Kurchatov and Ioffe put before Stalin the question of replacing Molotov with Beria as the head of all work on the atomic problem.

Usually, after visiting Beria's office in Lubyanka, Kurchatov, Kikoin, Alikhanov and Ioffe would come up to me, where we would have lunch in the rest room, after which they would delve into the work on documents received from abroad.

Our scientists, in order to speed up scientific work on atomic energy, were very interested in regularly getting acquainted with the progress of these works in the USA. In a letter dated March 7, 1943 to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Pervukhin

Kurchatov wrote:

"Obtaining this material is of enormous, invaluable importance for our state and science. Now we have important guidelines for subsequent scientific research, they enable us to bypass many, very laborious phases of the development of the uranium problem and learn about new scientific and technical ways to solve it."

Kurchatov emphasized that "the totality of information ... indicates the technical possibility of solving the entire problem in a much shorter time than our scientists think, who are not yet familiar with the progress of work on this problem abroad."

In another letter dated March 22, 1943, Kurchatov reported that he had carefully reviewed the latest work of the Americans on transuranium elements and set a new direction in solving the entire problem of uranium. "Until now," writes Kurchatov, "no work on transuranium elements has been carried out in our country. In this regard, I appeal to you with a request to instruct the intelligence agencies to find out what has been done in the direction in question in America."

Our sources of information and agents in England and the USA obtained 286 secret scientific documents and classified publications on atomic energy. In his notes in March-April 1943, Kurchatov named the seven most important scientific centers and 26 specialists in the United States, from whom information was of great importance. From the point of view of intelligence activities, this meant the operational development of American scientists as sources of important information.

In February 1944, the first meeting of the leaders of military intelligence and the NKVD on the atomic problem took place in Beria's office on the Lubyanka. Ilyichev and Milstein were present from the military, Fitin and Ovakimyan were from the NKVD. I was formally introduced as the leader of the "C" group, coordinating efforts in this area. Since that time, the intelligence of the People's Commissariat of Defense regularly sent us all the information that came in on the atomic problem.

I must confess that I was not pleased with Beria's order. Leading the work of the "C" group in coordinating the production and implementation of intelligence on the atomic bomb, I experienced difficulties, since I did not have a technical education, not to mention knowledge in the field of physics. At the same time, I led the actions of sabotage partisan detachments in the rear of the German armies, and this was my main duty.

In 1944, Kheifetz returned to Moscow and reported to me and Beria his impressions of meetings with Oppenheimer and other well-known scientists involved in the atomic project. He said that Oppenheimer and those around him were deeply concerned that the Germans might get ahead of America in building the atomic bomb.

After listening to Heifetz's report, Beria said that the time had come for closer cooperation between the security agencies and scientists. In order to improve relations, remove the suspicion and critical attitude of specialists towards the NKVD bodies, Beria suggested establishing more trusting, personal relations with Kurchatov, Kikoin and Alikhanov. I invited the scientists to my house for dinner. However, this was not only a hospitable gesture: on the orders of Beria, I and my deputies - Generals Eitingon and Sazykin - as operational workers had to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Kurchatov, Alikhanov and Kikoin. We behaved with them as friends, confidants, to whom they could turn with their daily worries and requests.

One evening, after working on the next material, we had dinner in the recreation room. There was a bottle of the best Armenian cognac on the table. I can't stand alcohol at all, even a small dose always gave me a severe headache, and it seemed to me that our leading scientists, by their temperament and hard mental work, also do not drink alcoholic beverages. So I offered them a teaspoon of brandy in their tea. They looked at me in amazement, laughed and poured themselves sweaty glasses, drinking to the success of our common cause.

At the beginning of 1944, Beria ordered me to send all intelligence materials, developments and signals that affected people involved in the atomic problem and their relatives. Soon I received a special message that Kikoin's younger brother naively shared his doubts about the wisdom of leadership with a colleague, and he immediately informed the operative worker who was in touch.

When I informed Beria about this, he ordered me to call Kikoin and tell him to influence his brother. I decided not to call Kikoin, went to his laboratory and told him about the "pranks" of his younger brother. Kikoin promised to talk to him. Their explanation was recorded by operational eavesdropping equipment installed in the apartments of leading atomic scientists.

I was surprised that the next day Beria showed up at Kikoin's laboratory to finally dispel his fears about his brother. He collected all three Kurchatov, Alikhanov, Kikoin - and said in my presence that General Sudoplatov was attached to them in order to provide full assistance and assistance in their work; that they enjoy the absolute trust of Comrade Stalin and his personal. All the information that is provided to them should help in fulfilling the task of the Soviet government. Beria repeated: there is no reason to worry about the fate of their relatives or people they trust - they are guaranteed absolute security. Scientists will be created such living conditions that will enable them to concentrate only on solving issues of strategic importance for the state.

On Beria's instructions, all scientists involved in the Soviet atomic project were provided with decent housing, dachas, used special shops where they could buy goods on a par with government leaders using special cards; All personnel of the nuclear project were provided with special nutrition and highly qualified medical care. At the same time, all the personal files of scientists, specialists and operational workers who were directly involved in the project or in obtaining intelligence information on the atomic problem were transferred from the personnel department to Beria's secretariat. At the same time, the most important operational materials on atomic energy obtained by intelligence were transferred to Beria's secretariat from the American department. About two hundred pages were withdrawn from the Enommoz operational development file on the atomic bomb, which is still kept in the archives of the foreign intelligence service. In order to strengthen the security regime, no one had access to these materials without Beria's sanction. I remember a conflict with Beria's deputy, Zavenyagin, who demanded that he be acquainted with the documents. I refused him, and we had a strong quarrel; he gained access to intelligence materials only after Beria's permission.

The great administrative abilities of Beria in solving the atomic problem are also recognized by the participants in our atomic program, for example, Academician Khariton in his interview about the creation of the atomic bomb in the Ogonyok magazine (1993).

When we received information that the American authorities were paying special attention to the secrecy of their nuclear project, Eitingon and I suggested using groups of illegal immigrants as couriers and to work with sources of information: we understood that American counterintelligence would pay attention to Heifetz's connections with pro-communist circles, having access to the specialists of the Manhattan Project. Having received the corresponding directive from Moscow, Zarubin ordered Kheifetz to immediately stop intelligence operations using Communist Party activists.

However, a number of Communist Party activists continued to act on their own initiative. In 1943, violating the instructions received from Zarubin, they, not knowing about our contacts with the Oppenheimer family, turned to him with a request to provide information to the Soviet Union about the work in Los Alamos. Oppenheimer, who was afraid of revealing ties through his wife and brother with our people, was forced to inform the American intelligence services about this request of an acquaintance of a physicist associated with

Communist Party. This led to the fact that all communications with prominent physicists involved in the work on the atomic bomb were switched to an illegal intelligence channel and the use of special couriers who had impeccable cover in the eyes of American counterintelligence.

In 1943-1944 we used various channels to approach American atomic secrets. Our main targets were the Los Alamos Laboratories, the Oak Ridge Plants, and the Berkeley Nuclear Research Laboratories. We also tried to infiltrate industrial firms that carried out orders related to the creation of atomic weapons.

In 1943, the famous actor, head of the Moscow Jewish Theater Mikhoels, together with the Jewish poet, our trusted agent, Fet, made a long trip to the USA as the head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Mikhoels's visit and the development of his connections in the Jewish communities were carried out by Kheifets.

Beria received Mikhoels and Fefer on the eve of their departure and the dates they were instructed to carry out widespread propaganda in the United States of the great significance of the contribution of the Jewish people to the development of science and culture of the Soviet Union and to convince American public opinion that anti-Semitism in the USSR was completely eliminated due to the Stalinist national politicians.

Zarubin and Kheifets informed Oppenheimer and Einstein about the situation of Jews in the USSR through proxies. According to them, Oppenheimer and Einstein were deeply moved by the fact that in the USSR Jews were guaranteed a safe and happy life. At the same time, rumors reached Oppenheimer and Einstein about Stalin's plan to create a Jewish autonomous republic in the Crimea after winning the war against fascism.

Oppenheimer and Fermi did not know that already at that time they appeared in our operational materials as sources of information under the code names "Director of the reservation", "Promissory note", "Hare". The pseudonym "Promissory note" was sometimes used for the source of generalized materials coming from physicists who participated in the American atomic project. As far as I remember, Oppenheimer and Fermi sometimes appeared under the common pseudonym "Star". I repeat once again - none of them has ever been our recruited intelligence agent.

The wife of the famous sculptor Konenkov, our trusted agent, acting under the direction of Liza Zarubina, became close to the great physicists Oppenheimer and Einstein at Princeton. She managed to charm Oppenheimer's inner circle. After Oppenheimer cut off ties with the American Communist Party, Konenkova, under the leadership of Liza Zarubina and Pastelnyak ("Luka"), an employee of our residency in New York, constantly influenced Oppenheimer and even earlier persuaded him to hire specialists known for their leftist convictions, to the development of which our illegal immigrants and Semenov's agents were already aimed.

Liza Zarubina, wife of Vasily Zarubin, a US resident, was an outstanding personality. Charming and sociable, she easily established friendships in the widest circles. An elegant woman with features of classical beauty, a refined nature, she attracted people like a magnet. Lisa was one of the most highly skilled recruiters of agents. She recruited refugees from Poland and one of Szilard's assistants. She found a way to Szilard through one of his relatives in Moscow, who worked in a special NKVD laboratory for aviation technology. Lisa was fluent in English, German, French and Romanian. She looked like a typical representative of Central Europe, but could unrecognizably change her appearance and demeanor. Liza was related to Anna Pauker, a prominent figure in the Romanian Communist Party. Lisa's older brother led the militant organization of the Romanian communists, and when he was tried by a military tribunal, he managed to escape from the courtroom twice. In 1922, he died in a shootout.

Lisa became an intelligence officer as early as 1919. At one time she

worked in the secretariat of Dzerzhinsky. Her first husband was Blyumkin, who shot the German ambassador Count Mirbach in Moscow in 1918. Blumkin was a key figure in the SR conspiracy against Lenin in July 1918. When the Social Revolutionary rebellion failed, Blumkin turned himself in, was forgiven and continued to work in the Cheka-GPU, carrying out the tasks of Dzerzhinsky and sometimes Trotsky, with whom he also knew.

In 1929, Blumkin created an illegal residency in Turkey under the guise of a trading company, using funds received from the sale of Hasidic Hebrew manuscripts, transferred to him from the special collections of the State Library. V.I. Lenin. This money was intended to create a military sabotage organization against the British in Turkey and the Middle East. However, Blumkin transferred part of the funds to Trotsky, who, after being expelled from the USSR, lived in Turkey. In addition, he brought to Moscow a letter from Trotsky addressed to Raden.

Lisa was shocked by this. She reported this to management. Blumkin was arrested and later shot.

A few years later, Lisa married Vasily Zarubin, who returned from China. They were sent to illegal work in Europe on false documents - a married couple of businessmen from Czechoslovakia. For seven years, the Zarubins were in various countries of Western Europe, successfully carried out a number of important intelligence operations, including the recruitment of a Gestapo officer Lehman ("Breitenbach") and the wife of the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany ("Yuna"), with whom Lisa kept in touch until May 1941.

In 1941, Liza Zarubina was awarded the rank of captain of state security. In the US, she often traveled to California, where Heifetz introduced her to the circle of people close to the Oppenheimer family. Thanks to Heifetz's connections, Lisa received all the installation data on Oppenheimer's family members and relatives, who were distinguished by left-wing views. Kheifetz organized a meeting between Lisa and Oppenheimer's wife Katherine, who sympathized with the Soviet Union and communist ideals. As far as I remember, Katherine Oppenheimer did not appear in the operational documents as a source of information, but we worked through a woman close to Oppenheimer, and it seems to me that this woman was his wife.

CIA veterans who were working with us in the spring of 1992 on the archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU came across materials from the Comintern about Oppenheimer's connections with members of a secret cell of the US Communist Party. They also found a request from our intelligence to Dimitrov, the chairman of the Comintern, in June 1943 with a request to provide data for the use of these contacts.

Liza Zarubina and Kheifets, through Oppenheimer's wife Katherine, persuaded Oppenheimer to refrain from openly expressing pro-Communist and left-wing views so as not to attract the attention of American intelligence agencies. They also persuaded Oppenheimer to share information with scientists fleeing Nazi persecution. Oppenheimer agreed to do this, as well as to admit these people to scientific work in the atomic project, if he received confirmation of their anti-fascist views.

Thus, Oppenheimer, Fermi, and Szilard helped us to install reliable undercover sources of information at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos, and the Chicago Lab. As far as I remember, there were four important sources of information in the USA that transmitted data about the work of the laboratory to our residencies in New York and Washington. They also kept in touch with our illegal residency, which used a pharmacy in Santa Fe as a front. The materials that Semyonov and later Yatskov received in New York came from Fuchs and one of our deep cover agents via couriers.

One of these couriers was Lona Cohen. Her husband, Maurice Cohen, was recruited by Semyonov. In 1939, Maurice married Lona and also involved her in intelligence work. At first, Lona was uncooperative, considering him

as treason, but Maurice convinced her that they were acting in the name of higher justice and that this kind of cooperation was not betrayal at all. The center agreed to her work, bearing in mind that in illegal operations, married couples are most effective.

When Maurice was called up for military service in July 1942, it was decided to use his wife as a courier. Yatskov ("Johnny"), an employee of the Soviet consulate in New York, received Lona Cohen for communication from Semenov. To cover her trips to New Mexico, Lona attended a tuberculosis sanitarium under the pretense of prevention. In 1992, Yatskov remembered her as a beautiful young woman. Shortly after the atomic bombs were dropped on Japanese cities in August 1945, Lona made a perilous trip to the small town of Albuquerque. There, she was supposed to be handed over extremely important documents for the Moscow Center. Having received the documents, Lona arrived at the station just before the train left with a small suitcase, a bag and a purse. Under the conditions of the special regime introduced in this town, the security service checked the documents and luggage of all passengers. And here Lona showed a high level of professional training. She placed her suitcase in front of the checkers and nervously sorted through the contents of her bag in search of a lost ticket. She handed the reticule, where under the napkins lay a bundle with drawings and a detailed description of the world's first atomic bomb, to the carriage conductor, who held it while she looked for a ticket. Lona boarded the train, confident that the conductor would definitely return her reticule. And so it happened. When Yatskov met her in New York, she told him that everything was in order, but the police almost had these materials in their hands. This episode was first told by intelligence historian Chikov.

After the arrest of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1950, the Coens managed to elude the American authorities. In Moscow, they received special training as illegal agents. After receiving New Zealand passports in the names of Peter and Helen Kroger from our service, the Coens settled in London. They owned a second-hand bookshop and, in their small house on the outskirts of London, provided considerable assistance in radio communication to the KGB resident Conon the Young, acting under the name of Gordon Lonsdale. The Coens were arrested with him in 1961 and sentenced by an English court to twenty years in prison, spent six years in prison, then they were exchanged. After their release, they lived in Moscow. Lona died in 1992, Maurice outlived her by three years.

Among the most prominent scientists, whom we actively developed, using their family ties and anti-fascist sentiments, was Georgy Gamow, a Russian physicist who fled to the United States in 1933 from Brussels, where an international congress of physicists was held. About the possible use of Gamow and approaches to him through his relatives in the USSR, who were actually our hostages, we were guided by Academician Ioffe. Gamow had extensive connections with American physicists and maintained friendly relations with Niels Bohr. We instructed Liza Zarubina to secure his cooperation with us. Lisa found Gamow through his wife, also a physicist. Gamow taught at Georgetown University in Washington and, most importantly, led the annual seminars on theoretical physics in Washington. Thus, he could discuss with the leading physicists of the world the latest, most promising developments.

We managed to take advantage of the wide acquaintances that Gamow had. Lisa Zarubina forced Gamow's wife to cooperate in exchange for guarantees that relatives in the Union would be supported during the difficult war years.

I remember that in some cases American specialists violated the rules for working with secret documents and showed Gamow reports on experiments and consulted with him. Violation of the mode of work with documents was done by common agreement of scientists. However, from the Gamovs I manage to get general characteristics of scientists orally, to find out their moods, assessments of the real possibility of creating an atomic bomb. It seems to me that between Bohr, Fermi, Oppenheimer and Szilard there was

an informal agreement to share secret atomic weapons research with a circle of left-wing anti-fascist scientists.

Another source in Tennessee who received information from Fermi and Pontecorvo was connected to an illegal group that also used a pharmacy in Santa Fe as a front, from where materials were couriered to Mexico. As far as I remember, three people - scientists and clerks - copied the most important documents, getting access to them from Oppenheimer, Fermi and Weiskoff.

The pharmacy in Santa Fe (New Mexico) was for the illegal station created in the USA by Eitingon and Grigulevich in the operation against Trotsky, an emergency turnout in 1940. As I have already written, Eitingon and Grigulevich then received wide powers from Beria to recruit agents without the sanction of the Center. By 1940, Grigulevich had extensive experience in intelligence work behind him. In the 1930s, in Lithuania, he took part in the liquidation of secret police provocateurs who had infiltrated the Lithuanian Komsomol, then participated in operations against Trotskyists abroad, and fought in Spain. For actions in Latin America, Grigulevich had a reliable cover - a network of pharmacies in Argentina, which was owned by his father.

In the chapter on Trotsky, I wrote that Eitingon and Grigulevich created a parallel illegal network that could be used in the United States and Mexico outside of contacts with Spanish emigration in these countries. Leaving America in 1941, Eitingon and Grigulevich registered a pharmacy for one of the agents of their group. Now this network has helped us to find sources of information on the atomic problem that are of interest to us.

Oppenheimer suggested to the director of the project, General Groves, to invite the most prominent European scientists to work in America. Among them was Niels Bohr. Bohr was by no means our agent, but he rendered us invaluable services. After speaking with Meitner in 1943 in Sweden, he actively advocated sharing atomic secrets with the international anti-fascist community of scientists. The well-known Finnish writer Vuolijoki, a prominent agent of our intelligence, played a huge role in shaping the position of Bohr and Meitner. Vuolijoki was sentenced to death in Finland for spying for the USSR, but she was released under public pressure (one of her sons-in-law was the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the other was one of the leaders of the Communist Party of England - Palm Dutt), and she ended up in Sweden.

Subsequently, through Vuolijoki and Meitner, we managed to find approaches to Bohr and arrange a meeting with him for our employees Vasilevsky and Terletsky in November 1945 in Copenhagen.

In 1943, according to Feklisov, one of the participants in the operation of our intelligence on the atomic problem, in the essay "The Heroic Feat of Klaus Fuchs" (Military History Journal, 1990, No. 12; 1991, No. 1), Oppenheimer proposed including Klaus Fuchs in the group British specialists who arrived in Los Alamos to participate in the work on the atomic bomb.

In 1933, the German communist Fuchs was forced to seek refuge in England. After graduating from the University of Bristol, he continued to work there as a physicist. In 1941, Fuchs reported his participation in atomic research to a prominent figure in the communist and labor movement, Jürgen Kuczynski. Kuchinsky informed our ambassador in England Maisky. Maisky was at odds with Gorsky, the NKVD resident in London, and therefore instructed military attache Kremer to get in touch with Fuchs. Fuchs first met with Ursula Kuczynski ("Sonya"), a military intelligence agent, one of the organizers of the Red Chapel network.

Fuchs, before leaving for the United States, was instructed on the conditions for resuming communication with him. In the USA, Fuchs had to emphasize in his communication with his American colleagues that he was the only person in the group of British specialists who was threatened by a German concentration camp. For this reason, Fuchs enjoyed the absolute confidence of Oppenheimer and, on his instructions, received access to materials to which he had no formal

relationship. Oppenheimer had to enter into a sharp conflict with General Groves, who categorically objected to the generalized information on the results of research and experiments being brought to the attention of British scientists (Fuchs informed us about this).

By the way, the British authorities and intelligence also set their specialists the task of collecting all the information on the atomic bomb, since the Americans were not going to share atomic secrets with them.

There may have been another reason Oppenheimer invited Fuchs to Los Alamos and later to the Center for Scientific Research at Princeton. Maybe Oppenheimer knew that Fuchs would not stay in America after the war. I remember that his words were recorded in intelligence materials: information should be transmitted by those who, for personal reasons, will leave Los Alamos and the country after the end of work on the atomic bomb. In addition, Oppenheimer had reason to believe that Fuchs was connected to the Communists, and this could also play a role.

Liza Zarubina re-established contact with two deeply undercover agents, Polish Jews, on the west coast. They were legalized by Eitingon in the early 1930s during his brief illegal business trip to the United States. It was originally planned that these agents would settle in California in order to organize sabotage on transport ships exporting strategic raw materials (coal, oil, metal) to Japan in the event of a military conflict between the USSR and Japan. For more than ten years, these agents have not been involved in active operations.

One of them was a dentist (codenamed "Chess Player") who received a French medical degree in the late 1920s. His education was paid by the GPU. The dentist's wife managed to establish friendly relations with the Oppenheimer family. Thus, a secret connection was created with the Oppenheimer family and his inner circle, which fell out of the field of view of American counterintelligence. As far as I remember, the FBI did not know about Zarubina's secret contacts either. Only in 1946, in connection with other revelations, did the FBI firmly establish that Zarubina was an employee of Soviet intelligence, but she was already in Moscow.

Thus, Semenov and Liza Zarubina created a system of reliable communications, and Kvasnikov and Yatskov, under the leadership of Ovakimyan, ensured the uninterrupted transmission of information on atomic weapons at the final stage of work at Los Alamos in 1945.

It must be avenged that the acquaintance of our scientists with the scientific works of the developers of American atomic weapons - Oppenheimer, Fermi, Szilard - was of great importance for the wide development of work on the atomic bomb in our country. I want to emphasize that this information came to us in a secret way with their knowledge. As far as I remember, through "Robert" and "Director of the Reservation," as Los Alamos was called in our correspondence, we received five secret summary reports on the progress of work on the creation of the atomic bomb. Similar material was sent not only to us, but also to Swedish scientists. According to our intelligence, as far as I remember, the Swedish government had detailed information on the atomic bomb in 1945-1946. The Swedes refused to create their own nuclear weapons because of the enormous costs. But the fact that they had enough data to make a decision on this issue allows us to conclude that the Swedes, like us, received information on the atomic bomb, in particular, from Bohr after he left Los Alamos.

We knew that military and explosives experts were playing a leading role in the development of atomic bomb work in America. In turn, we also decided, taking into account the American experience, to appoint a prominent specialist in the production of explosives, a prominent organizer of the military industry, Vannikov, responsible for the engineering and administrative support of our atomic project. Vannikov played the same role in the work on the atomic bomb in the USSR that General Groves played in

USA.

We were not only informed about the technical developments of the American atomic program, but also knew about the internal purely human conflicts and rivalry between scientists and specialists working at Los Alamos, about the tense relations between scientists and General Groves, the director of the project. In particular, we noted the information about serious disagreements between General Groves and Szilard. Groves was furious at Szilard's academic style of scientific work and his refusal to submit to the regime of secrecy and military discipline. The fight with the general became a kind of hobby for Szilard. Groves did not trust him and considered his participation in the project risky. He even tried to remove him from work, despite Szilard's enormous contribution to the implementation of the world's first uranium nuclear chain reaction.

Oppenheimer, according to Heifetz, was a broad-minded man who foresaw both the enormous possibilities and the dangers of the use of atomic energy for peaceful and military purposes. We knew that he would remain an influential figure in America after the war, and therefore we had to carefully hide contacts with him and his inner circle. We understood that the approach to Oppenheimer and other prominent scientists should be based on the establishment of friendly relations, and not on undercover cooperation, and our task was to use the fact that Oppenheimer, Bohr and Fermi were staunch opponents of violence. They believed that a nuclear war could be prevented by creating a balance of power in the world based on equal access of the parties to the secrets of atomic energy, which, in their opinion, could fundamentally affect world politics and change the course of history.

In intelligence work, the distinction between useful connections, acquaintances, and trusting relationships is very arbitrary. Official documents use a special term - undercover intelligence, which means obtaining materials based on the work of agents and intelligence officers acting under the guise of some official position. However, the most valuable information often comes from a source that is not an agent who has assumed formal obligations to cooperate with intelligence and receives money for this. In operational documents, this source of information is still considered as undercover, since access to it is based on contacts and connections with agents or trusted persons from an environment close to him.

I was amazed that the outlook of many of the most prominent Western physicists and our scientists coincides. As I already wrote, Vernadsky in 1943 quite sincerely suggested to Stalin that he ask the American and British governments to share with us information about atomic research and work together with Western scientists on the creation of an atomic bomb. Ioffe, Kapitsa, Niels Bohr adhered to the same views.

Bohr, after conversations with Oppenheimer, who apparently knew about the leakage of information to Soviet and Swedish scientists, met with President Roosevelt and tried to convince him of the need to share the secrets of the Manhattan Project with the Russians in order to speed up work on building a bomb. Our sources in England reported that Bohr not only made this proposal to President Roosevelt, but, allegedly on his behalf, returned to England and tried to convince the British government of the need for such a step. Churchill was horrified by this proposal and ordered that steps be taken to prevent Bohr from contacting the Russians.

Spouses Zarubina, despite the results achieved in the work, did not live long in Washington. And it happened not through their fault and not because of the activity of the FBI. One of Zarubin's subordinates, an employee of the NKVD residency at the embassy, Lieutenant Colonel Mironov, sent a letter to Stalin, in which he accused Zarubin of collaborating with American intelligence services. Mironov in the letter indicated - he followed Zarubin - the dates and hours of Zarubin's meetings with agents and sources of information, calling them contacts with representatives of the FBI. The Zarubins were recalled to Moscow to verify the charges against them. Examination

took almost six months. It was established that all meetings were authorized by the Center and the valuable information received by Zarubin did not cast a shadow of suspicion on him. collaboration with the FBI. Mironov was recalled from Washington and arrested on charges of defamation. However, when he appeared before the court, it turned out that he had schizophrenia. He was fired from the service and placed in the hospital.

In 1943, the Center decided to build contacts with nuclear scientists using illegal channels. Vasilevsky, our resident in Mexico, was entrusted with direct control over the actions of illegal immigrants. After the departure of the Zarubins, Vasilevsky led a network of agents from Mexico City, sometimes visiting Washington, but did not stay there for a long time so as not to attract the attention of American counterintelligence. It was decided to minimize the use of station strongholds in Washington.

I recall that Vasilevsky told me how in 1944 he arrived in Washington and, in particular, was supposed to transfer the materials received from Fermi to the Center, but, to his horror, found out that the cipher was missing. The next day, the American police brought the cryptographer to the embassy, picking him up in one of the bars, where he drank himself unconscious. Vasilevsky immediately decided not to use the embassy in Washington to convey particularly important messages. In 1945, for his successful work in the development of the Fermi line in the USA, Vasilevsky was appointed my deputy in department "C". For almost two years he headed the department of scientific and technical intelligence in the NKVD, and then in the Committee of Information - our central intelligence agency, which existed from 1947 to 1951. Vasilevsky was dismissed from the security agencies in 1948 - he became one of the first victims of the anti-Semitic campaign that began. In April June 1953, he began to work again in the apparatus, but he was fired again - now on a reduction in staff as a "suspicious" person. Vasilevsky died in 1979.

The description of the design of the first atomic bomb became known to us in January 1945. Our residency in the US has reported that it will take the Americans a minimum of one year and a maximum of five years to develop a substantial arsenal of atomic weapons. This report also said that the explosion of the first two bombs would probably be carried out in 2-3 months.

At this time, our exploration intensified, and we received significant information about the Manhattan project and about plans to exploit uranium ore deposits in the Belgian Congo, Czechoslovakia, Australia and the island of Madagascar. Military intelligence agents managed to infiltrate a Canadian firm that had created a special corporation for the development of uranium ore. Around the same time, Moravec, the chief of intelligence of the Czechoslovak government in London, who was collaborating with us, informed us that the British and American secret services had shown great interest in the development of uranium deposits in the Sudetenland. He got access to the materials of the Anglo-Czech negotiations on the exploitation of uranium deposits in the post-war period.

As the end of the war approached, the first steps in the geological search for uranium ore began to be taken in the Soviet Union.

In February 1945, we received information and captured German documents on high-quality uranium reserves in the Bukhovo region - in the Rhodope Mountains. We turned to Dimitrov, at that time already the head of the Bulgarian government, and the Bulgarian authorities assisted us in the development of uranium deposits. A Soviet-Bulgarian mining society was created, in which Shchors, an employee of our intelligence, a mining engineer by education, played a prominent role.

Uranium ore from Bukhovo was used by us during the start-up of the first nuclear reactor. In the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, uranium ore was of lower quality, but it was also used by us. We hid these works from the Americans and the British. To coordinate our intelligence and counterintelligence

events in Czechoslovakia was sent an experienced intelligence worker, a former resident in Italy Rogatnev.

The supply of Bulgarian uranium, in view of its higher quality, was given exceptional attention. Dimitrov personally oversaw uranium developments. We sent more than three hundred mining engineers to Bulgaria, urgently recalling them from the army; Bukhovo area was guarded by internal troops of the NKVD. However, it soon became known through agents that the American intelligence services were preparing acts of sabotage in order to disrupt the supply of uranium to the Soviet Union and at the same time reveal the true scope of work in order to determine the timing of the creation of nuclear weapons in the USSR. The Americans even tried to organize the kidnapping of Shchors. We took countermeasures: Eitingon engaged in the recruitment of American intelligence officers and their wives, detained with the assistance of our agents from local Turks near uranium deposits, but did not achieve success.

About one and a half tons of uranium ore per week came from Bukhovo. Our intelligence provided those working in the uranium mines with American instructions and methods for the technique of uranium mining and its accounting.

In 1946, large deposits of higher quality uranium were discovered in the USSR and immediately began to be developed. However, intensive work at Bukhovo continued: we wanted to give the Americans the impression that we urgently needed Bulgarian uranium. The agreement signed by Zavenyagin, Beria's deputy, with the Bulgarian government on the development and supply of uranium, the disinformation activities organized by Eitingon and a group of officers, confirmed the importance for us of these uranium developments.

In March 1945, we sent a generalized report to Beria on the successful development of work in the United States on the creation of an atomic bomb. This report described in detail the American centers, in particular the laboratory at Los Alamos, the factories in Oak Ridge, gave a detailed description of the activities of the American company Kellogg, a subsidiary of Kellogg in New York, noted the work on the atomic bomb carried out by the largest US firms "Jones Construction", "DuPont", "Union Carbide", "Chemical Company" and others. The report indicated that the US government had spent \$2 billion on the development and production of atomic weapons and that the project employed more than 130,000 people in total.

In addition, the agents reported on a strictly limited circle of people who knew the purpose of the work being carried out; on admission to such data of government officials only with the personal permission of the President of the United States; on the creation within the framework of the project of its own counterintelligence, police and other services; on the removal from US libraries of all previously open publications on research in the field of atomic energy; on the replacement of the real names of scientists and specialists who were directly related to work in such atomic centers as Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, Hanford, with pseudonyms; on the physical protection of responsible persons, as well as on other similar measures.

In April 1945, Kurchatov received from us very valuable material on the characteristics of a nuclear explosive device, the method of activating an atomic bomb, and the electromagnetic method of separating uranium isotopes. This material was so important that the very next day the intelligence agencies received his assessment.

Kurchatov sent a report to Stalin, built on the basis of intelligence, on the prospects for the use of atomic energy and the need for extensive measures to create an atomic bomb.

12 days after the assembly of the first atomic bomb at Los Alamos, we received a description of its device from Washington and New York. The first telegram arrived at the Center on June 13, the second on July 4, 1945. By the way, five years later, these telegrams may have been deciphered by the Americans and served as the basis for pressure on Fuchs to confess to espionage. I, however, cannot fully believe this, although I confirm that the sources indicated in the telegrams, "Charles" and "Mlad" are Fuchs and Pontecorvo.

We reported to Beria that two sources, unrelated to each other, reported on upcoming nuclear test.

After the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, our work on the creation of the atomic bomb acquired a wide scope. At this time, we received from the USA especially valuable materials.

A detailed report by Fuchs ("Charles") was delivered by diplomatic post after he met on September 19 with his courier Harry Gold. The report contained thirty-three pages of text describing the design of the atomic bomb. Later we received an additional message on the device of the atomic bomb through the communication channels from Pontecorvo ("Mlad"), which was transmitted by Lona Cohen. I don't remember whose description of the bomb was more detailed. But the resemblance was striking. It seems to me that the materials contained a detailed overlay of a chapter of the report to the government and the US Congress on the construction of the atomic bomb, which, for reasons of secrecy, was omitted from the official publication, the report of the Smith Commission, published on August 12, 1945. We knew that Oppenheimer and General Groves had edited! this report. Fuchs reported that Oppenheimer refused to sign the report released by the commission because he believed it contained misinformation intended to delay atomic research in other countries.

Among the materials that we received in September-October 1945, there were some sections of the report that were not included in the report of the Smith Commission and photographs of the premises of the factories in Oak Ridge. They were especially valuable, since we also started building enterprises and accelerated work on the creation of the first nuclear reactor. I recall that the twelve-page reference-report compiled by Semenov on the construction of the atomic bomb was signed by Vasilevsky and sent to Beria and Stanin. This document actually formed the basis of the program of all works for the next 3-4 years.

The quality and volume of information received from sources in the US and England was very important for the organization and development of our atomic program. Detailed reports containing data on the operation of the first atomic reactors, specifications for the production of uranium and plutonium bombs played an important role in accelerating our work. Valuable were the data on the design of the system of focusing explosive lenses and the size of the critical mass of uranium and plutonium for the explosion of a nuclear device; about the principle of implosion formulated by Fuchs - a focused explosion inwards; data on plutonium-240, the detonator device, the time and sequence of operations for the production and assembly of the bomb, and the method of actuating the initiator contained in it. Data were obtained on the construction of plants for the purification and separation of uranium isotopes, which significantly reduced the time for processing uranium ore, as well as diary entries about the first test explosion of an atomic bomb in the United States in July 1945

of the year.

After the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the Americans, the Politburo and the GKO (State Defense Committee) on August 20, 1945 decided to radically reorganize the work on atomic energy - problem No. 1. For this, a Government Special Committee with emergency powers was created. Beria, as a member of the Politburo and deputy chairman of the GKO, was appointed its chairman, Pervukhin - deputy, General Makhnev - secretary.

The committee included members of the Politburo - Malenkov (secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks for personnel), Voznesensky (chairman of the State Planning Commission); Academicians Kurchatov and Kapitsa; People's Commissar of Ammunition Vannikov, Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Zavenyagin. The working apparatus of the committee was the specially created 1st Main Directorate under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Vannikov was appointed head of the department, Zavenyagin became his first deputy. The Special Committee had a scientific and technical council, in which Vannikov, Deputy Chairman - Ioffe. Department "C", which I headed in the NKVD NKGB, was the working apparatus of the so-called 2nd bureau of the committee.

Stalin suggested that Ioffe and Kapitsa become members of the Special Committee on Problem No. 1. However, Ioffe refused, citing his advanced age. He said that he would be more useful in the scientific and technical council.

It was Ioffe who recommended the appointment of Professor Kurchatov to the post of scientific director of the atomic program.

Participating in the meetings of the Special Committee, I realized for the first time how important the personal relationships of the members of the government, their ambitions in making important government decisions were. The people's commissars, members of this committee, strove to establish their position and positions at all costs. Very often there were heated arguments and hard-hitting explanations. Beria acted as an arbitrator and sought the unconditional strict implementation of all directives of the leadership.

I maintained friendly relations with both Ioffe and Kapitsa. At Beria's suggestion, I presented Kapitsa with a hunting rifle. Kapitsa once complained that he had only one copy of a book about Russian engineers written by his father-in-law, Academician Krylov, a major shipbuilding engineer, that had survived in poor condition. I resorted to the services of a special government printing house - the book was printed in two copies on excellent paper. Kapitsa sent one copy to Stalin, hoping to get an appointment with him.

I had to observe the growing rivalry between Kapitsa and Kurchatov at meetings of the Special Committee. Kapitsa was an outstanding personality, an excellent tactician and strategist, and a major organizer of science. Often he commented on scientific speeches with a great sense of humor. I remember that one meeting of the Special Committee in 1945 took place during the broadcast hours from London of a football match between our team and the English team. Members of the Politburo and the government were shocked when Kapitsa suggested that they stop the meeting and listen to the match. There was an awkward pause, but Beria, who appreciated humor, to everyone's amazement, announced a break. The tension subsided. And then the mood of those present rose, because our team won.

Kapitsa, who played an important role in initiating our work on the atomic problem and establishing contacts with Western scientists, in particular Terletsky and Bor, naturally laid claim to an independent and leading position in the implementation of the atomic project.

But soon relations between Kapitsa, Beria and Voznesensky deteriorated. Kapitsa suggested that Kurchatov consult with him on evaluating the results of the work and conclusions before reporting to the meetings of the Special Committee. Pervukhin supported Kapitsa, but Beria and Voznesensky disagreed. Beria demanded that Kapitsa and Kurchatov submit alternative proposals to the government. Moreover, Beria suggested to Kapitsa on the basis of his institute that he duplicate a number of Kurchatov's experiments.

Kapitsa was indignant and argued that such a reorientation of his institute would mean the actual curtailment of work in theoretical physics in the Soviet Union. I don't remember exactly, but, in my opinion, a month later, in October 1945, Kapitsa turned to Beria and Voznesensky for an explanation why they had not consulted him when they decided to create new educational institutes for training specialists in the field of nuclear physics outside the Academy sciences - Engineering-Physical (MEPhI) and Physical-Technical (MIPT).

Kapitsa wrote to Stalin that Beria and Voznesensky did not listen to the opinions of scientists, that only scientists could be entrusted with the leadership of the atomic project. After unsuccessful attempts to get support from Stalin in this conflict, Kapitsa was soon removed from the Special Committee. He was left alone, but deprived of access to atomic development.

The Special Committee on the Atomic Problem had emergency powers to mobilize forces of any resources and reserves for the creation of an atomic bomb. In practice, this meant that when uranium ore processing plants began to be built in Siberia, a number of enterprises had to be severely limited in electricity supply. I remember furious

disputes and obscene abuse of committee members Pervukhin and Voznesensky, when the question of which enterprises to retain full electricity consumption was discussed. It was completely unexpected for me that Pervukhin, defending the enterprises of the chemical industry he oversees, attacked Voznesensky, a senior member of the Politburo.

In the first post-war year, reconnaissance operations on the atomic problem enjoyed special priority. In December 1945, Beria left the post of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs and moved from Lubyanka to the Kremlin, to the office of the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Meetings of the Special Committee on the Atomic Problem also began to be held in the Kremlin, and not in the NKVD. As the head of the Committee's 2nd bureau, an employee of the government apparatus, I received a permanent pass to enter the Kremlin at any time.

Meetings of the Special Committee usually took place in Beria's office. These were heated discussions. In addition to heated disputes over the distribution of electricity, Pervukhin continued his attacks on Voznesensky, demanding an increase in the funds of non-ferrous metals for the needs of the chemical industry, engaged in the production of nuclear fuel. I was surprised by the mutual claims of members of the government. Beria intervened in these disputes, calling Pervukhin and Voznesensky to order. And for the first time I saw that everyone in this special government body considered themselves equal in official position, regardless of which of them was a member of the Central Committee or the Politburo.

Until my arrest, I maintained good relations with Vannikov and the secretary of the committee, General Makhnev. They were brilliant connoisseurs of our industry, they could accurately indicate which plant could be entrusted with the execution of orders for the atomic project.

I often went to Makhnev's office. For some reason, he is considered an NKVD general, but this is not so. An excellent organizer of the production of ammunition and work on the atomic bomb, he never served in the state security agencies. Makhnev was very interested in information about the work of American industrial enterprises and firms participating in the atomic program. Often we received this information from open sources, through TASS, and regularly compiled reviews of economic performance and technological potential, gleaned from scientific and technical journals about American firms engaged in individual government orders in connection with the creation of the atomic bomb.

Only then did I realize what great interest and attention to economic issues and the development of industry Beria showed. I learned that Beria, as deputy chairman of the State Defense Committee during the war years, was responsible not only for the activities of the special services, but also for the production of weapons and ammunition, the work of the fuel and energy complex. In particular, he was interested in the issues of oil production and refining. There were models of oil refineries in Beria's office. On his initiative, Vannikov, Ustinov and Baibakov (they were not yet 40 years old) were nominated to the high posts of people's commissars for the production of ammunition, weapons and the oil industry.

Participation in meetings chaired by Beria opened up a new world unknown to me. I knew that intelligence was of great importance in foreign policy, in ensuring the security of the country, but the restoration of the national economy and the creation of the atomic bomb were no less important. Until now, I remember our talented industrial organizers and plant directors who participated in solving the most complex organizational and technical issues. The development of these decisions turned out to be much more interesting than the management of the agent network in peacetime. Economic activity allowed people to show talents and abilities in solving such problems as overcoming the lack of resources, disruptions in the supply of equipment and materials. To organize the coordinated work of many industrial branches of industry for the implementation of the atomic program was no less difficult than the successful conduct of reconnaissance and sabotage operations during the war years.

Beria, rude and cruel in dealing with subordinates, could be attentive,

courteous and provide daily support to people engaged in important work, protected these people from all sorts of intrigues of the NKVD or party authorities. He always alerted plant managers to their personal responsibility for doing the job right, and he had a unique ability to inspire people both in awe and inspire them to work. Naturally, for the directors of industrial enterprises, his personality was largely identified with the power of the state security agencies. It seems to me that in the beginning fear prevailed among people. But gradually, those who worked with him for several years, the feeling of fear disappeared and confidence came that Beria would support them if they successfully completed the most important national economic tasks. Beria often encouraged, in the interests of business, the freedom of action of large business executives in resolving complex issues. It seems to me that he took these qualities from Stalin - tight control, exceptionally high demands and, at the same time, the ability to create an atmosphere of confidence in the leader that, if the task was successfully completed, support would be provided to him.

In the autumn of 1945, a critical moment came in our program of work on the atomic bomb. It was necessary to start building the first Soviet nuclear reactor. However, scientists were not unanimous in assessing the materials presented by intelligence, as the information was contradictory. The Americans used two types of reactors: graphite and heavy water. There was a huge risk in the use of samples of uranium-235 obtained by military intelligence. It was necessary to make a decision which way to go in the construction of the first reactor. How to solve a problem? A fantastic idea was put forward - to send a group of scientists to the USA for a secret meeting with Oppenheimer, but Oppenheimer's position in society changed dramatically. Our attempt to restore the interrupted direct contacts with him through mutual acquaintances in Chicago in 1945 was unsuccessful. Another proposal was put forward - to send Kapitsa to Niels Bohr. Kapitsa was well known in the West and enjoyed great prestige in the scientific world. There is no doubt that his letter to Bohr in 1943 contributed to the establishment, through the mediation of intelligence, informal contact with Western scientists working in the field of atomic research. However, Kapitsa behaved independently, and the leadership did not like it, and the hostile attitude of Beria and Voznesensky towards him excluded the possibility of his trip abroad.

Kurchatov and Kikoin proposed that a highly qualified specialist, Professor Zeldovich, who worked for Kurchatov, should go to Denmark to meet Bohr, accompanied by intelligence officers. But Zeldovich was not suitable for this role, since he was not an intelligence officer and we could not disclose to him, if necessary, during a business trip, agent ties abroad. These circumstances forced us to rely on those scientists who worked in the apparatus of intelligence agencies. The choice was small. The staff of department "C" had two officers - research assistants, physicists by education, who spoke English to some extent. After they were hired by the NKVD, both attended the seminar of Kapitza and Landau. One of them, Rylov, being a scientist, showed a great inclination towards analytical and intelligence work. Another, Terletsky, who had just defended his Ph.D. thesis, was subsequently a laureate

State Prize, was not connected by his scientific interests with the group of Kurchatov, Ioffe, Alikhanov and Kikoin and could give his own assessment of scientific materials. In 1943, he turned down Kurchatov's offer to work for him. Terletsky and Rylov translated and edited the materials that came to us on atomic work, and reported at meetings of the Scientific and Technical Council of the Special Committee.

Working in intelligence, Terletsky continued to be a creative person. Along with the evaluation and processing of information on the American atomic bomb, he often proposed his own conclusions to the scientific and technical council, this created problems because we had to submit all the information received to the top management twice a day, and Terletsky was sometimes late with the assessment, and I listened from management

unpleasant remarks. However, we decided to opt for Terletsky - he could have made the right impression on Niels Bohr with his wide erudition and awareness.

Beria approved my proposal to send Terletsky to Copenhagen. It was out of the question to send Terletsky to a meeting alone to carry out such an important task. He had no idea at all about operational work, so it was decided that Colonel Vasilevsky, who was directly in charge of the Fermi line, should leave with him. It was assumed that Vasilevsky would start a conversation with Bohr, and Terletsky would move on to a discussion of technical issues. They also had an interpreter with them, our employee, unfortunately, I do not remember his last name. Vasilevsky left for Denmark under the surname Grebetsky, Terletsky - under his own.

In his memoirs, Terletsky writes that on the eve of his trip to Copenhagen, he was received by Kapitsa and advised not to ask Bohr many questions, "but simply introduce himself, convey a letter and gifts from him, to tell about Soviet physicists, and Bohr himself will report on many things that interest us."

The preliminary arrangement for a meeting with Bohr was reached thanks to the Finnish writer Vuolijoki, whom I have already written about, and the Danish writer Martin Andersen Nexa. Nekse was not our agent, but in the 1940s he provided great assistance to Rybkina in establishing useful contacts and acquaintances with influential people in the Scandinavian countries.

In July 1993, during a conversation with Terletsky, we recalled some of the details of this story. On the eve of the meeting, Bohr informed the Soviet embassy that he would receive our delegation. At the beginning of the meeting, Bor was nervous, Terletsky recalled, and his hands trembled slightly. Apparently, Bohr realized that for the first time he was dealing directly with representatives of the Soviet government, and the time had come to fulfill the decision made by him and other physicists to share the secrets of the atomic bomb with the international community of scientists and Soviet physicists.

After the first meeting with Vasilevsky at a reception at our embassy on November 6, 1945, Bohr preferred to talk on scientific issues only with Terletsky. There was no choice, and a private meeting between Terletsky and Bor, with the participation of an interpreter, had to be sanctioned. The questions for the conversation with Bor were prepared in advance by Kurchatov and Kikoin.

Terletsky told Bor that he was warmly remembered at Moscow University, gave him a letter of recommendation and gifts from Kapitsa, greetings from Ioffe and other Soviet scientists, and thanked him for his readiness to advise Soviet specialists on the atomic program.

Bohr answered questions about the methods of obtaining uranium in the USA, diffusion and mass spectrography, about the combination of these methods, how high productivity is achieved with the mass spectrographic method. He said that in the USA all boilers work with graphite moderators, since the production of heavy water requires an enormous amount of electricity. Terletsky received answers to a number of fundamentally important questions, including about plutonium-240; there was not a word about him in Smith's official report, which we received from Bohr and from the USA. The meeting, according to Kurchatov, was important for the verification by our specialists of the several hundred reports and works of Fermi, Szilard, Bethe, Oppenheimer and other foreign scientists that were available to intelligence. It was considered, as Kvasnikov recalls, 690 scientific materials. According to John Hassard, a well-known British nuclear physicist at London's Imperial College, Bohr verbally gave the Russians essential information about the design of the American atomic bomb. Jack Sarfatti, a theoretical physicist, a student of one of the creators of the atomic bomb, H. Bets, also believes that Bohr's answers contained important strategic information on the creation of nuclear weapons.

It is significant that Bohr formally informed the British secret service about the meeting and conversation with Soviet experts on the atomic program, the transfer to the Russians

report of the Smith Commission, but at the same time he kept silent about the nature of the questions put to him. Thus, before the arrest of Fuchs, the Western intelligence services had no idea that we already knew the fundamentally important issues of creating atomic weapons.

By the way, immediately after the atomic explosions in Japan, Szilard predicted that the Soviet Union would create its own nuclear weapons in 2-3 years. And Bohr at the same time advocated the establishment of international control over the use of atomic energy.

After Terletsky's successful trip, I developed friendly relations with Kurchatov, Alikhanov and Kikoin. My wife and I spent several weekends with them and their wives at a government holiday home. In our apartment not far from the Lubyanka, we arranged several dinners for scientists.

Together with Vasilevsky, I had to select nuclear physicists for trips to the USA, England and Canada in order to attract Western specialists from nuclear centers to work in the Soviet Union.

During the same period, Vasilevsky traveled several times to Switzerland and Italy to meet with Bruno Pontecorvo. To cover these trips, he used the visits of the Soviet delegation of cultural figures, headed by the famous film director Grigory Alexandrov and movie star Lyubov Orlova. The operational support of his meetings with Pontecorvo was carried out by Gorshkov and Yatskov, who at times worked in Italy and the USA.

Vasilevsky also met with Joliot-Curie. However, Beria and Stalin decided not to involve Joliot-Curie in nuclear development in the USSR, although he wanted to come to us. Staying in the West, Joliot-Curie was more useful, because he influenced the formation of the pacifist position of prominent atomic scientists that was beneficial to us.

For successful actions in Denmark, Switzerland and Italy, Vasilevsky was rewarded with a solid cash prize of a thousand dollars at that time and a separate apartment in the center of Moscow, which was then a rarity.

Our active operations in Western Europe coincided with the beginning of the Cold War. We were aware that American counterintelligence had gotten pretty close to our sources of information and the agents serving them. The operational situation has deteriorated dramatically. When our first reactor was launched in 1946, Beria ordered that all contact with American sources be cut off. At a meeting with me, he suggested that we consider how to use the authority of Oppenheimer, Fermi, Szilard and other scientists close to them in the anti-war movement. We believed that the anti-war campaign and the struggle for nuclear disarmament could prevent the Americans from blackmailing us with the atomic bomb, and launched a large-scale political campaign against US nuclear superiority. We wanted to bind the American ruling circles with political restrictions on the use of nuclear weapons - we did not yet have an atomic bomb. Beria categorically ordered that prominent Western scientists not be compromised by ties with our intelligence: it was important for us that Western scientists represent an independent, authoritative and influential political force friendly to the Soviet Union.

Through Fuchs, the idea of the role and political responsibility of scientists in the nuclear age was carried to Fermi, Oppenheimer, and Szilard, who strongly opposed the creation of the hydrogen bomb. They were completely sincere in their arguments and did not suspect that Fuchs, under our influence, had logically led them to this decision. Acting as anti-fascists, they objectively turned into political allies of the USSR.

Beria's directive was based on information received from Fuchs in 1946 about serious disagreements between American physicists on the improvement of atomic weapons and the creation of a hydrogen bomb. At a meeting held in late 1945 or early 1946, scientists, along with Fuchs, opposed the development of a "superbomb" and were met with strong objections from Teller.

Klaus Fuchs declined Oppenheimer's offer to continue working with him at Princeton, returned to England and continued to supply us with critical

information. From the autumn of 1947 to May 1949, Fuchs handed over to our operative Feklisov the main theoretical developments on the creation of a hydrogen bomb and plans for the start of work, which began to be implemented in the USA and England in 1948.

The information received from Fuchs about the results of tests of plutonium and uranium atomic bombs on the Eniwetok Atoll was especially valuable. Fuchs met with Feklisov in London once every 3-4 months. Each meeting was carefully prepared and lasted no more than forty minutes. Feklisov was accompanied by three operatives in order to exclude the possibility of fixing the meeting by the surveillance service of the British counterintelligence. Fuchs and Feklisov were never recorded by British counterintelligence. Fuchs himself unwittingly contributed to his failure by informing the British atomic security service that his father had secured a position as a theology lecturer at the University of Leipzig in East Germany. At this time, the American secret services exposed our agent, Fuchs' courier, Gold, he identified Fuchs in the photograph, and the Americans reported this to the British counterintelligence. Fuchs was arrested in 1950. After intense interrogation, Fuchs admitted that he had passed secret information to the Soviet Union. He was tried, and the indictment in his case mentioned only one meeting with a Soviet agent in 1947, and that entirely on the basis of his personal confession. Feklisov spoke about Fuks' cooperation with our intelligence and the circumstances of his arrest in the essay I mentioned "The Heroic Feat of Klaus Fuks" and in his book "Across the Ocean and on the Island".

Information about the development of atomic research in England and the real stocks of nuclear weapons in the United States, transmitted by Fuchs in 1948, coincided with extremely important information from Washington received from McLean, who since 1944 served as secretary of the British Embassy in the United States and controlled the entire office of this department. . He said that the potential of US nuclear weapons is insufficient to wage war with the Soviet Union.

In the scientific circles of the USA and the USSR, an important role was played by leading scientists with independent political opinions.

Thus, for example, Oppenheimer reminds me to a great extent of our scientists of the academic type—Vernadsky, Kapitsa, and others. They always tried to preserve their own face, they tried to live in a world created by their imagination, with the illusion of independence. But the independence of a scientist involved in works of great national importance always remains an illusion. And for Kurchatov, the interests of the state have always been the main thing in scientific work. He was less stubborn and more dependent on the authorities than Kapitsa and Ioffe. Beria, Pervukhin and Stalin immediately grasped that he represented a new generation of Soviet scientific intelligentsia, less associated with the old traditions of Russian scientists. They correctly understood that he was ambitious and determined to subordinate all scientific work to the interests of the state. The government sought to speed up the testing of the first atomic bomb at any cost, and Kurchatov took the path of copying the American nuclear device. At the same time, parallel work on the creation of a Soviet-designed bomb did not stop. It was blown up in 1951. In the United States, Teller took a similar position, seeking to establish a US monopoly on nuclear weapons.

Being real scientists, Kurchatov and Oppenheimer at the same time were the administrative heads of the most important projects that were of crucial importance for the world. The conflict of personal beliefs, scientific interests and administrative duties in this case is inevitable. We cannot be their judges, the work of these people on the bomb opened a new era in science. However, it is not only a matter of discovery, the essence of the problem is that for the first time the largest scientists of the world acted not only as carriers of scientific ideas, but also as statesmen.

It should be noted that initially neither Kurchatov nor Oppenheimer were surrounded by the so-called "scientific bureaucracy", science officials who appeared in

on a significant scale in the second half of the 1950s.

In the 1940s, no government in the world could control scientific and technological progress effectively enough. The paradox was that both the American and the Soviet governments were forced, in the interests of a successful solution of the atomic problem, to rely on joint work with scientists of various worldviews, perhaps even hostile to the authorities, and to adapt to their requests, needs, extravagant behavior. The most prominent scientists of the world, sharing anti-fascist and pacifist views, full of illusions about the possible leading role of scientists in the world government after the discovery of atomic energy, were inclined to share achievements in this area with like-minded scientists from other friendly countries.

With the beginning of the Cold War, the mood of scientists changed dramatically. That is why American physicists rejected in 1948 an attempt by our illegal Fischer (Abel) to resume cooperation with them. They realized that this was not cooperation, but espionage.

Intelligence materials on the atomic bomb played an invaluable army not only in military policy, but also in the diplomatic sphere. When Fuchs gave us data on the design of the atomic bomb that was not published in the Smith Commission report, he also provided us with extremely valuable information about the scale of production of uranium 235. This information from Fuchs made it possible to calculate how much the Americans produced uranium and plutonium every month, and helped determine the real number of atomic bombs that they had.

The information received from Fuchs and McLean made it possible to conclude that the American side was not ready to wage a nuclear war in the late 1940s and even in the early 1950s. In terms of value, this information can be equated with Penkovsky's information about the real Soviet nuclear missile potential, which he handed over to the Americans in the early 60s. Like Fuchs, Penkovsky reported that Khrushchev was bluffing and not ready for a confrontation with the US, just as the Americans were not ready for a full-scale nuclear war with the USSR in the late 1940s.

When the Cold War began, Stalin firmly pursued a line of confrontation with the United States. He knew that the threat of an American nuclear attack before the end of the 1940s was unlikely. According to our information, it was not until 1955 that the United States and Britain were to build up stockpiles of nuclear weapons sufficient to destroy the Soviet Union.

Fuchs and McLean's information played a big role in the strategic decision of the Soviet leadership to support the Chinese Communists in the civil war in 1947—

1948. We had information that President Truman was considering using atomic weapons to prevent a Communist victory in China. Then Stalin deliberately went to aggravate the situation in Germany, and in 1948 the Berlin crisis arose. Reports appeared in the Western press that President Truman and British Prime Minister Atlee were ready to use atomic weapons to prevent West Berlin from falling under our control. However, we knew that the Americans did not have the necessary number of atomic bombs to confront us simultaneously in Germany and in the Far East, where the fate of the civil war in China was being decided. The American leadership overestimated our threat in Germany and missed the opportunity to use its nuclear arsenal to support the Chinese Nationalists.

In 1951, when we were developing a plan for military sabotage operations against American bases, Molotov, commenting on our proposals, noted that such operations should be carried out in accordance not only with military considerations, but above all with political decisions. He said that our position and resolute action on the blockade of Berlin helped the Chinese Communists to a great extent. For Stalin, the victory of the Communists in China meant enormous support for his line in the confrontation with the United States. I remember well that Stalin's strategy was to create a USSR-China support axis in opposition to the Western world.

In August 1949, we tested our first atomic bomb. This event failed

the result of incredible seven years of hard work. There was no report of this in our press - we were afraid of a preventive nuclear strike by the United States. At least that's what Beria's assistant on atomic issues, General Sazykin, told me. Therefore, the announcement of this in the American press on September 25, 1949, shocked Stalin, the leadership of the atomic project, and especially those responsible for ensuring the secrecy of atomic developments. Our first reaction is that American agents managed to obtain data on the test. If we penetrated the Manhattan Project, then similar actions by American intelligence cannot be ruled out. To everyone's relief, about a week later, our scientists reported that scientific instruments installed on aircraft, with regular air sampling, could detect traces of an atomic explosion in the atmosphere. The scientists' explanation allowed the security agencies to avoid the accusation that American intelligence managed to introduce its agent into the circles of the creators of domestic atomic weapons.

Kurchatov and Beria for outstanding services in strengthening the power of our country were awarded the highest awards, large cash prizes and special diplomas on the life-long status of honorary citizens of the Soviet Union. All participants in the Soviet nuclear program received privileges: free transport, state dachas, the right to enroll children in higher educational institutions without entrance exams. The last privilege was maintained until 1991 for the children of intelligence officers - illegal immigrants who are on duty abroad.

When evaluating the materials on the atomic problem that have passed through Section C, one should, in my opinion, take into account the statements of Academicians Khariton and Alexandrov at the meeting dedicated to the 85th anniversary of Kurchatov's birth. They noted his genius in designing the atomic bomb and in the crucial decision to start building factories for the production of uranium and plutonium, while we had only a tiny amount of them, obtained by laboratory means. The atomic bomb was created in the USSR in four years. Intelligence materials have certainly accelerated the development of our atomic weapons.

For me, Kurchatov remains one of the great scientists who played the same role as Oppenheimer, although, of course, he is not such a scientific giant as Niels Bohr and Enrico Fermi were. Kurchatov's talent, his organizational abilities and Beria's perseverance played an important role in the successful solution of the atomic problem in the Soviet Union.

When Niels Bohr visited Moscow State University in 1961 and took part in the students' celebration "Physicist's Day", the KGB advised Terletsky, a professor at Moscow State University and a laureate of the State Prize in Science and Technology, to stay out of his sight. However, Terletsky came to the meeting, but Bor, fixing his gaze on him, pretended not to recognize him. During those years I was in prison, and Vasilevsky went about with the stigma of a dangerous person, expelled from the party "for treacherous anti-party activities in Paris and Mexico." The KGB, however, acted wisely in not reminding Bohr of his meetings with our intelligence agents in Denmark. Only shortly before Bohr's death he was visited in Copenhagen by our intelligence officer Rylov, an employee of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in the past a young researcher in Department C, and Bohr recalled his meeting with Soviet specialists in 1945.

Vasilevsky calculated that the Western intelligence services would sooner or later record our contacts with Pontecorvo in Italy and Switzerland, and even then a decision was made on the routes of his possible escape to the USSR. In 1950, immediately after the arrest of Fuchs, Pontecorvo fled to the USSR through Finland. This operation of our intelligence successfully blocked all efforts of the FBI and British counterintelligence to reveal other sources of information on the atomic problem, in addition to Fuchs. Upon arrival at the Union, Pontecorvo began scientific work at the nuclear center near Moscow, in Dubna. He wrote an excellent autobiographical book in which he told a lot of interesting things about Fermi, but about his

contacts with Soviet intelligence remained silent.

Although Vasilevsky was in disgrace for about seven years - until 1961, he met with Pontecorvo in the 60s and 70s, invited him to dinner at the restaurant of the House of Writers. In 1968, when I was released from prison, Vasilevsky invited me to meet and dine with Pontecorvo. But since the restaurant was in the sphere of constant attention of the KGB, and intelligence leaders were categorically against Vasilevsky's meetings with Pontecorvo, I refused.

In 1970 I became a member of the Moscow association of writers and regularly visited the writers' club. There, in a restaurant, Vasilevsky and I met Ramon Msrkader at dinner. I do not like to draw attention to myself, so I asked Ramon not to wear the star of the Hero of the Soviet Union. But Mercader and Vasilevsky, on the contrary, took pleasure in challenging the authorities with their awards. Vasilevsky continued to write letters to the Central Committee of the CPSU until the last days of his life, exposing the then head of the KGB intelligence, General Sakharovsky, his failures and mistakes in working with agents.

The Rosenbergs were recruited to cooperate with our intelligence service in 1938 by Ovakimyan and Semyonov. Ironically, the Rosenbergs are presented in the press by the Americans and by us as key figures in atomic espionage in favor of the USSR. In fact, their role was not so significant. They acted completely out of touch with the main sources of information on the atomic bomb, which were coordinated by a special intelligence apparatus.

In 1943-1945, the New York residency was proclaimed by Kvasnikov and Pastelnyak, and then for a short time by Cohen, under whose supervision Semyonov, Feklisov, Yatskov worked. By the way, Kvasnikov, in an interview with American television in 1990, admitted that the Rosenbergs, helping our intelligence in obtaining information on aviation, chemistry and radio engineering, had nothing to do with serious materials on the atomic bomb had.

In the summer of 1945, Rosenberg's son-in-law, US Army senior sergeant Greenglas ("Caliber"), who worked in the workshops of Los Alamos, on the eve of the first test of the atomic bomb, prepared for us a short message about the operation of checkpoints. The courier could not go to meet him, so Kvasnikov, with the approval of the Center, instructed agent Gold ("Raymond"), after a scheduled meeting with Fuchs in Santa Fe, to go to Albuquerque and get a message from Rosenberg's son-in-law. With its directive, the Center violated the basic rule of intelligence - in no case should an agent or courier of one intelligence group receive contact and access to another intelligence network that is not connected with it. Gringlas' information on the atomic problem was insignificant and minimal, for this reason our intelligence did not resume contact with him after this meeting with Gold. When Gold was arrested in 1950, he pointed to Gringlas and the latter to the Rosenbergs.

The first time I learned about the arrest of the Rozenbergs was from a TASS report and I was not at all concerned about this news. This may seem strange to some, but it should be noted that, being responsible for the activities of several thousand saboteurs and agents behind German lines and for hundreds of sources of intelligence information in the United States, including operations of illegal immigrants, I did not feel worried about the fate of our main intelligence operations. Having worked in my time as the head of Department C, I certainly knew the main sources of information and I cannot recall that among them, at least according to intelligence materials on the atomic bomb, the Rosenberg spouses figured as important sources. It occurred to me then that the Rosenbergs might have been involved in our intelligence operations, but in no case did they play any independent role. In general, their arrest was not presented to me as an event deserving special attention.

A year passed, and at the end of the summer of the following year, I was genuinely surprised when Lieutenant General Savchenko, then deputy head of the intelligence department of the MGB, came to my office and said that the newly appointed Minister of State Security Ignatiev

ordered to report to him on all the continents on the failures of our intelligence operations in the USA and England in connection with the Rosenberg case. He also said that a special commission had been set up in the Central Committee of the party to consider possible consequences in connection with the arrests of Gold, Gringlas and the Rosenbergs. As far as I understood, it was about violations of the rules of operational intelligence work by employees of state security agencies.

I knew Savchenko since the 1920s, when he headed the operational department of the headquarters of the border troops on the Romanian border. In 1946, he became Minister of State Security in Ukraine, and later, in 1948, under the patronage of Khrushchev, he went to work in the Committee information, then became deputy head of the intelligence department of the MGB. In the late 40s - In the early 50s, he personally approved the conduct of major intelligence operations in the United States and England. However, Savchenko told me that he could not be sure of the conclusion of his apparatus in the Rosenberg case, since their cooperation with us began even before the war and continued during the war. By that time, our former residents in the United States and Mexico, Gorsky and Vasilevsky, known in these countries as Gromov and Tarasov, had already been dismissed from the intelligence agencies. The fate of the Zarubins, who knew the circumstances of the operational work of our agents in the United States in the mid-40s, was similar. Kheifetz had already been in prison for two years as a member of the "Zionist conspiracy". Therefore, Savchenko could not ask them to comment on archived operational materials for a report to the Central Committee. The most important witnesses Hovakimyan and Zarubin, who headed the American branch of intelligence during the war years, did not hide their disrespectful attitude towards Savchenko for his incompetence in intelligence matters and openly called him a "son of a bitch". They refused to talk with him, declaring that they would give their explanations only to the Central Committee. Yatskov, Sokolov and Semyonov, who were involved in these cases, were abroad at the time, but Savchenko did not want to rely on their explanations or on the conclusions of Kvasnikov, who headed scientific and technical intelligence, as interested parties.

Savchenko and I were summoned to the Central Committee on a single question: who was responsible for the ill-fated telegram that authorized Gold's fatal meeting with Greenglass in Albuquerque.

The Central Committee of the party was presented with a certificate on the results of the work of the commission, in the preparation of which Savchenko and employees of the American branch of intelligence of the security agencies participated. As far as I remember, it claimed that the failures were the result of mistakes allegedly made by Semenov in recruiting and instructing Gold. The memo also stated that Greenglass's secret meeting with Gold had been authorized by the Center. The certificate said that Hovakimyan, the head of the American direction in the 40s, was dismissed from the state security agencies. Of course, there was not a word about his enormous merits.

I categorically objected to these conclusions, since Semyonov and Ovakimyan in specific cases showed themselves to be highly qualified operatives. In fact, it was they who at the end of the 1930s created a very significant network of undercover sources of scientific and technical information in the United States. However, in the Central Committee and the personnel department of the MGB, my ideas were rejected, they were blamed for the failure, and they were dismissed from the intelligence agencies largely on a wave of anti-Semitism, since Semenov was a Jew. I remember how we raised money to support Semyonov until he got a job as a consultant and translator at the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of the Academy of Sciences.

The following year, this scandalous story unexpectedly received a continuation. I was again summoned to the Central Committee to see Kiselyov, Malenkov's assistant. Quite unexpectedly for myself, I saw Savchenko at his place. Kiselev was categorical and rude. From his lips, I heard accusations familiar to me from 1938-1939: the Central Committee exposed the attempts of individual employees and a number of senior officials of the MGB to deceive the party by downplaying the role of the Rosenbergs in intelligence work. In an anonymous letter from an official of the MGB, which was received by the Central Committee, Kiselev said, the significant role of the Rosenbergs in obtaining information o

problem. In conclusion, Kiselyov emphasized that the Party Control Committee would consider these signals about attempts to mislead the Central Committee on the substance of the Rosenberg case.

Savchenko and I categorically objected to Kiselyov with one voice, explaining that our intelligence operations in the USA on the atomic problem were actually stopped in 1946 and we were forced to rely on sources in England. We referred to Beria's instructions received in 1946 to preserve sources of information for the implementation of a political campaign beneficial to us to promote nuclear disarmament among the scientific community and intelligentsia of Western countries.

Kiselev accused us of insincerity and of trying to belittle the importance of our intelligence contacts with the Rosenbergs. I answered him that I was fully responsible for the work of our agents infiltrating US nuclear facilities in 1944-1946. At the same time, I emphasized that, of course, the value of undercover penetration and approach to the objects of interest to us varied sharply depending on the official position of the sources of information. The Rosenbergs were only an insignificant link in our peripheral activities at American nuclear facilities. The materials of the Rosenbergs and their relative Gringlas cannot be classified as important information. The Rosenbergs were a naive, but at the same time devoted to us, by virtue of their communist convictions, a married couple, ready to cooperate with us in everything, but their activities were not of fundamental importance in obtaining American atomic secrets.

Kiselev announced in an official tone that he would bring our explanations to the attention of the Central Committee and Malenkov personally, and the Party Control Committee would establish who exactly was to blame for the failure of intelligence operations in the United States.

The Rosenbergs behaved heroically during the investigation and at the trial. By this that is why our authorities have stopped looking for scapegoats.

Taking a retrospective look at events, it becomes obvious that the Rosenberg case from the very beginning acquired a pronounced political coloring, which overshadowed the insignificance of the scientific and technical information provided by their group in the field of atomic weapons. They gave information on chemistry and radar. Much more important for the American authorities and for the Soviet leadership turned out to be their communist worldview and ideals, which were so necessary for the Soviet Union during the period of the Cold War and anti-communist hysteria. In exceptionally difficult conditions, they proved themselves to be firm supporters and friends of the Soviet Union.

The quick arrest of the Rosenbergs immediately after the Greenglass confessions, in my opinion, indicates that the FBI acted in the same way as the NKVD, following political guidelines and instructions, instead of approaching the matter professionally. The FBI neglected to identify all individuals associated with the Rosenbergs. This would require not only outdoor surveillance, but also undercover development of the Rosenbergs in order to identify the operative worker or illegal - a special agent with whom they were in contact. This was the only way to determine the degree of their participation in Soviet intelligence operations. The haste shown by the FBI prevented American counterintelligence from reaching out to Fisher (Colonel Abel), a Soviet illegal immigrant who settled in the United States in 1948 and was arrested only in 1957. A photograph codenamed Helen Sobell, the wife of Morton Sobell, a member of the Rosenberg group, was discovered by FBI agents only during Fisher's arrest, in his wallet.

When I was read excerpts from a book by Lanfear and Shachtman about the work of the FBI in the 1950s against Soviet agents, I was struck by how the FBI and the NKVD used the same methods when investigating politically motivated espionage cases. In fact, the entire Rosenberg case was built on the basis of the confessions of the accused. I was particularly struck by the arguments of the Rosenbergs' defense that the FBI had previously coached and instructed Gold and Greenglass for their future testimony at the trial. Of course, the actions of the FBI were quite logical, because it failed in its main task: to reveal the real role of the Rosenbergs in

obtaining and transferring secret information to the Soviet Union. The so-called "sketches and diagrams" of Gringlas appearing in the case could in no way be the basis for drawing conclusions about the nature of the intelligence work and the information provided to us.

The Rosenbergs became victims of the Cold War. The Americans and we wanted to make the most of the political gain from the lawsuit. It is significant that during the period of rampant anti-Semitism in our country and the exposure of the so-called "Zionist conspiracy", our propaganda attributed to the American authorities the conduct of an anti-Semitic campaign and the persecution of Jews in connection with the Rosenberg trial.

However, it seems to me that in the USA the Rosenberg trial caused an increase in anti-Semitic sentiment. We have used this; quickly translated into Russian plays and pamphlets by an American writer, then a communist, Howard Fast about anti-Semitism in the United States. The Rosenberg case has become one of the powerful factors in our propaganda and the activities of the World Peace Council, created with our active support in the late 1940s.

As far as I remember, in the USA in the 1940s, four of our agent networks successfully operated independently of each other: in San Francisco, where there was a consulate; in Washington, where there was an embassy; in New York - on the basis of the Amtorg trade representative office and the consulate; and, finally, in Washington, which was headed by illegal resident Akhmerov. He supervised the activities of Golos, one of the main organizers of our intelligence work, closely associated with the Communist Party in the 1930s. In addition to this, an independent intelligence group under the leadership of Vasilevsky was actively operating in Mexico.

I remember that the escape in Canada in 1945 of Gouzenko, a cipher clerk from the military attache's office, had far-reaching consequences. Gouzenko provided the American and Canadian counterintelligence services with data that allowed them to get to our intelligence network, which was active in the United States during the war years. Moreover, he provided them with a list of codenames for American and Canadian atomic scientists that our intelligence and the military intelligence agency were actively developing. These atomic scientists were not our agents, but they were sources of important information on the atomic bomb.

The information received from Gouzenko, as well as the confessions of our military intelligence agent Bentley, who was recruited by the FBI, allowed the American counterintelligence to infiltrate our intelligence network. However, any orientation reported to the FBI by Gouzenko required careful verification, and this turned into years of painstaking work. When the American counterintelligence, after a long development, came to our sources of information, we had already obtained the most important information for us on the atomic bomb and mothballed ties with the agents. The FBI claimed that Gouzenko helped in deciphering our special telegrams, and this allowed us to expose our agents Gold, Nan and Fuchs.

However, I do not believe that the deciphering of the telegrams played a decisive role in revealing our intelligence operations. Back in December 1941, the agent Schulze-Boysen ("Sergeant Major") from Berlin informed us that the Germans had seized one of our cipher books at Petsamo in Norway. Naturally, we changed our code books. I remember that in 1944, within the framework of cooperation between Stalin and Tito, the question arose of teaching the technique of decoding the Yugoslav state security officers sent to us. At that time, Hovakimyan, deputy head of the NKVD intelligence department and head of the American direction, categorically objected to the training of the Yugoslavs. I also remember him saying: "We changed our encryption codes drastically after the failure of our underground groups in Germany. Why should we share experience with Tito's envoys, we have enough reason to suspect them of a double game - in cooperation with British intelligence. Hovakimyan's objections were accepted.

Back in 1944, when Zarubin returned from the United States, Ovakimyan expressed fears that the FBI had succeeded in introducing its agents into our intelligence groups. When Zarubin explained

regarding the unfounded accusations brought against him, nevertheless, as a precaution, we again changed the codes of cipher correspondence. Therefore, I do not think that the FBI came to our intelligence network based on the decryption of the code book captured in Petsamo.

The FBI never made it public and avoided discussing its methods of work and the sources of information used in every possible way. Lemfer, a former American counterintelligence officer, in his book "The FBI-KGB War" talks about the difficult process of restoring our code book: it was partially burned. Perhaps that is how it was. I cannot completely deny that the decryption did not play a role in the access of the US and Canadian counterintelligence to our sources of undercover information. Nevertheless, I believe that the FBI, in an effort to hide their own undercover source, deliberately invented a story about deciphering our correspondence.

In May 1995, the FBI denied my version that our intelligence had obtained data on the atomic bomb. The FBI noted that Fermi, Oppenheimer, Szilard, and Bohr were not, according to them, spies. But I didn't claim it.

Now the Americans have managed to decipher the correspondence of our stations in Washington, San Francisco, New York with Moscow, to a large extent, I believe, because in 1992 we ourselves handed over to the American side a number of Comintern materials, including the full text of cipher telegrams in Russian, received through the channels of intelligence of the NKVD. In view of the constant surveillance by American intelligence services since 1940 of our radio broadcast, they managed to establish, as our press reported, more than two hundred Soviet intelligence agents who participated in the extraction of materials on the atomic bomb and secret documentation of American government agencies, including intelligence agencies. But a number of key codenames remain undisclosed.

In September 1992, at the KGB military hospital, I met with a retired colonel, an intelligence veteran, Yatskov, who was in touch with Gold in 1945-1946. We recalled the whole story, told in Lemfer's book, about an allegedly intercepted telegram from our New York consulate to Moscow, which served as the basis for the American counterintelligence to go to Fuchs. We discussed the security of our communication cipher systems and their decryption capabilities. Yatskov and Feklisov also continued to believe that everything was falsified by the FBI; they presented, as it were, a deciphered telegram from our consulate to the Center about the meeting between Gold and Fuchs in January 1945 at the house of Fuchs's sister Christel. As Feklisov wrote in his book, the map of Santa Fe in the state of New Mexico near Los Alamos was used as evidence against Fuchs, where the meeting place of Gold and Fuchs was marked. Fuchs's fingerprints were alleged to have been on a map found during a search of Gold's apartment.

For me, an intelligence professional, the circumstances that prevented the FBI from infiltrating our intelligence network are quite understandable. The personnel and technical personnel of the Manhattan Project were recruited by the American administration in a great hurry - there were many foreigners involved in the project. The FBI simply did not have time for a year and a half to organize and put into action a powerful counterintelligence network among the scientists of the project. Meanwhile, an absolutely necessary prerequisite for revealing the deeply concealed contacts of atomic scientists with agents and couriers of Soviet intelligence was effective undercover surveillance and work with the personnel of the atomic project. In the USSR, our counterintelligence had much greater opportunities for comprehensive verification of all personnel, both scientific and auxiliary, involved in nuclear development. It relied on a highly developed system of operational accounting materials.

We must bear in mind the historical circumstances as well. In the initial period of the war, the main task of the FBI was to prevent the leakage of information on atomic weapons to the Germans. My assumption boils down to the fact that initially in 1942-1943 the FBI actively developed access to "German" connections and contacts of scientists who began to

work at the Los Alamos Laboratories. Pro-Soviet sympathies were taken into account and recorded, but they acquired significant significance only at the final stage in early 1945. As far as I know, the directive for increased detection of links with pro-Communist circles did not begin to be implemented by the project administration until late 1944, after the FBI recorded our great interest in the Berkeley radiation laboratory.

Although we succeeded in penetrating the environment of Oppenheimer, Fermi and Szilard through Fuchs, Pontecorvo and others, we never stopped our efforts to get materials from the Berkeley laboratory, since its developments were closely related to research at Los Alamos. The FBI recorded our interest in this lab, but they overestimated it and focused on opposing our work. Meanwhile, this direction played a subordinate role.

We received extremely valuable information on the atomic bomb at the last stage of work, on the eve of the first experimental explosion and the production of the first bombs. During the period when the American counterintelligence significantly increased its work, we broke off all contacts with the agents embedded in the project. As a result, none of the people who collaborated with us was caught red-handed by American counterintelligence and directly at the time of transferring information to us.

In conclusion, I want to say that Soviet intelligence initiated the development of large-scale work on the creation of atomic weapons in the USSR and provided significant assistance to our scientists in this matter. However, atomic weapons were created by the colossal efforts of our leading atomic scientists and industrial workers.

"COLD WAR"

It is generally accepted that the Cold War began with Winston Churchill's famous speech in Fulton on March 6, 1946, when he first mentioned the existence of the Iron Curtain. However, for us, the confrontation with the Western allies began immediately, as soon as the Red Army entered the territory of the countries of Eastern Europe. There was a conflict of interest. The principle of holding multi-party elections in the liberated lands and the formation of coalition governments (with an actual orientation to the West), as President Roosevelt suggested at Yalta, could be acceptable to us only for the transitional period after the defeat of Nazi Germany. I remember the remarks made by Foreign Minister Molotov and Beria: coalition governments in Eastern Europe will not last long. Later, in 1947, at the meetings of the Information Committee, headed by Molotov, these words acquired a new meaning. I note that from 1947 to 1951 the committee was the main intelligence agency, where almost all information from abroad on military and political issues flowed.

The Yalta Agreement, where the post-war division of the world between the USA, England, and the USSR was officially fixed, was, paradoxically, due to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In this treaty of 1939, as they say now, there were no highly moral principles, but for the first time it recognized the USSR as a great world power. After Yalta, Russia became one of the centers of world politics, on which the future of all mankind and the fate of the world depended.

Today, many analysts point to the closeness of Stalin and Hitler in their approach to the division of the world. Stalin is bitterly criticized for betraying the principles and norms of human morality by signing a pact with Hitler. At the same time, however, they lose sight of the fact that he also signed a secret agreement with Roosevelt and Churchill on the division of Europe (Yalta), and later with President Truman (Potsdam).

Ideological principles are by no means always decisive for secret deals between superpowers: this is one of the realities of our life. In December 1941, in Beria's office, I met our ambassador to the United States, Umansky, who had just

returned from Washington after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He told me that Harry Hopkins, a close friend of Roosevelt and his personal envoy for especially important matters, had raised the question of the dissolution of the Comintern and reconciliation with the Russian Orthodox Church on behalf of the President. According to him, this is necessary in order to remove obstacles from the opposition in providing assistance under Lend-Lease and to ensure political cooperation with the United States during the war years. These informal recommendations were accepted by Stalin as early as 1943 and created additional favorable conditions for a meeting in Tehran and then in Yalta. This showed the Americans that it was possible to negotiate with Stalin on the most delicate issues, taking into account his interests.

By the way, both we and the Americans stubbornly do not publish all the recordings of Hopkins' conversations with Soviet leaders. The reason is simple - confidential discussions of sensitive issues refute many stereotypes and indicate that the conspiracy of the West with Stalin on the division of spheres of influence in the world after the war was quite real. The leaders of the Western countries put up with the communist presence in world politics, and, moreover, they did not consider the communist regime an obstacle in reaching an agreement on the post-war order of the world.

At the end of 1944, preparing for the Yalta Conference, which, as is known, opened in February 1945, we held a meeting of the leaders of the NKVD-NKGB, the People's Commissar of Defense and the Navy, which was chaired by Molotov. The purpose of this meeting was to find out whether Germany could continue the war and to analyze information on possible areas of agreement with our allies America and England on the post-war order of the world. We were not informed about the exact pillbox of the opening of the conference: Molotov simply said that it would take place in the Crimea no later than in two months.

After this meeting, Beria appointed me the head of a special group for the preparation and verification of materials for the Yalta Conference. I dated wives was regularly briefing Molotov and Stalin. Beria himself went to Yalta, but did not take part in the conference. While preparing for the meeting in Crimea, we collected data on the leaders of the allied powers, compiled their psychological portraits, so that our delegation would know what it might face during the negotiations. We knew, but neither the Americans nor the British have a clear policy regarding the post-war future of the countries of Eastern Europe. The allies did not have any agreement on this issue, nor a special program. All they wanted was to return to power in Poland and Czechoslovakia the governments that were in exile in London.

Military intelligence and our own indicated that the Americans were open to compromise, so the flexibility of our position could provide an acceptable division of spheres of influence for the Soviet side in post-war Europe and the Far East. We agreed that the Polish government-in-exile should receive several important posts in the new coalition government of Poland. The demands of Roosevelt and Churchill, put forward at Yalta, seemed to us extremely naive: from our point of view, the composition of the Polish post-war government will be determined by those structures that received support from the Red Army.

In the period preceding the Yalta Conference, the Red Army was actively fighting against the Germans and was able to liberate a significant part of the Polish territory. It was not difficult to foresee the favorable turn of the political situation for us in all Eastern European countries, especially where the Communist parties played an active role in the National Salvation Committees, which were de facto provisional governments under our influence and partly control.

We could well have been flexible and agreed to hold democratic elections, since the governments in exile could not resist our influence. Beneš, for example, fled from Czechoslovakia to England, with the money of the NKVD took out the people he needed and was under our strong influence. Ludvík Svoboda, who later became president of Czechoslovakia, always looked to the Soviet Union.

The head of Czechoslovak intelligence, Colonel Moravec, later a general, since 1935 collaborated with Soviet intelligence agencies, first with military intelligence, then with the NKVD, which did not prevent him from adhering to anti-Soviet convictions, and was in close contact with our resident in London, Chichaev. The young Romanian King Mihai needed the support of our deeply conspiratorial groups associated with the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party in order to arrest General Antonescu, break the alliance with Hitler and join the anti-Hitler coalition. The situation in Bulgaria was developing quite favorably for us, given the presence and great influence of the legendary Georgy Dimitrov, the former chairman of the Comintern. During the Yalta competition, we were already preparing to secretly export uranium ore mined in the Rhodope Mountains of Bulgaria (uranium was needed for our nuclear program).

In 1945 I met Harriman, the United States ambassador to the Soviet Union. The first meeting was at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: I was introduced as Pavel Matveev, a member of the Molotov secretariat responsible for the technical preparations for the Yalta Conference. After the first official meeting, I invited Harriman to dinner at Aragvi, a restaurant then known for its exquisite Georgian cuisine. Harriman accepted my invitation with evident pleasure. I took with me to dinner, as my interpreter, Prince Janusz Radziwill, introduced to Harriman as a Polish patriot living in exile in Moscow (at that time he was our agent, who was in contact with Beria).

For Harriman and Radziwill it was a meeting of old acquaintances. Harriman owned a chemical factory, a porcelain factory, two coal and zinc mines in Poland. More importantly, Radziwill and Harriman jointly owned a coal and metallurgical complex that employed up to forty thousand workers. In his homeland, Janusz Radziwill was a very prominent political figure, he will be a senator and chairman of the Seimas Commission on Foreign Affairs. In the 1930s, he assisted Harriman in acquiring shares in several Polish enterprises in the face of very fierce competition from French and Belgian entrepreneurs.

I have already written that since the mid-1930s we have become actively interested in Radziwill. After the Red Army entered the eastern regions of Poland on September 17, 1939, he fell into our hands and Beria recruited him as a so-called agent of influence. Then I arranged for his return to Berlin, where for some time our residency monitored him and regularly reported to Moscow. He was often seen at that time at diplomatic receptions in the company of Goering, with whom he used to hunt and often came to his estate near Vilnius (then this territory belonged to Poland).

At the end of 1944 or the beginning of 1945, I was informed: Radziwill was detained and taken to Moscow; Beria ordered to use it in probing contacts with the Americans on the eve of the Yalta Conference. At that time our relations with Poland were strained. The Pro-Communist Provisional Committee in Lublin declared itself the government of the country in opposition to the Polish government-in-exile in London. We were going to actively use Radziwill to calm the pro-English-minded Poles. British and American authorities meanwhile, as we know, began to make inquiries about the whereabouts of Radziwill, who had disappeared from their field of vision.

A routine check of his pre-war connections showed us: Radziwill had business dealings with Harriman. Upon learning of this, Beria immediately ordered the transfer of Radziwill from Lubyanka, where by that time he had managed to sit for about a month, to a safe house in the suburbs of Moscow under house arrest. Beria decided to use Radziwill as an intermediary in communicating with Harriman.

At a dinner at Aragvi with Harriman and Radziwill, I was going to speak about our tolerance towards Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox clergy, even those who during the war years collaborated with the German authorities on

occupied territories (I personally received Archbishop Slipyi, one of the hierarchs of the Ukrainian Uniate Church; despite the fact that he worked closely with the Nazis, he was allowed to return to Lviv, but after the Yalta Conference he was arrested and sent to the Gulag on the orders of Khrushchev). I was also going to discuss the fate of Russian Orthodox priests over dinner at Aragvi and assure Harriman that the Soviet government was not persecuting Orthodox hierarchs.

As I spoke about this, Harriman remarked that the recent election of a Russian Orthodox patriarch had made a very favorable impression on American public opinion. No other questions I had prepared in advance could be discussed - Harriman felt that Radziwill was not an official translator at all, and began to discuss with him possible business prospects regarding the creation of joint ventures in the Soviet Union after the war. According to Harriman, the defeat of Germany could logically lead to the fact that Soviet-American economic cooperation would become real. We need economic help, so we will use American capital to raise the national economy destroyed by the war. Harriman hoped that the American side could make big profits by participating in the restoration of our economy. He mentioned the creation of joint ventures in the coal and mining and metallurgical industries as a form of economic cooperation. I was not prepared for this turn of events.

I told the American Ambassador that we are grateful for the information transmitted to us through diplomatic channels about the contacts of American agents with authorized persons of Goerdeler and General Beck in Switzerland. The Americans frankly informed us of their plans to withdraw Germany from the war. I also mentioned that we informed the US State Department about our secret contacts with the Finns in order to sign a peace agreement in which the Wallenberg family played the role of mediators.

In the end, I asked Harriman what the Americans expected from the Yalta Conference. My purpose in doing so was to prepare in advance our position on the most sensitive issues that the Americans would be concerned with. For example, the future of Poland, the post-war borders in Europe or the fate of Yugoslavia, Greece and Austria. Harriman, however, was not prepared for such a conversation. I realized that he needed instructions for this, which he has not yet received. He was more interested in how long Radziwill was going to stay in Moscow. I assured him that Radziwill was free to go to London, but preferred to go directly to Poland as soon as the country was liberated from the Germans.

Harriman, unexpectedly for me, raised the question of attracting Jewish capital to restore our war-ravaged economy. In particular, he made it clear that American business circles support the idea of using Jewish capital to revive the Gomel region in Belarus, a traditional place where Jews live compactly.

I did my best to translate the conversation into topical topics. Thus, I advised Harriman to pay attention to the behavior of his daughter, whose adventures with young people in Moscow could do her great harm: there is a lot of hooliganism in the city, which is not surprising, given the difficulties of wartime. I expressed my remarks in a soft, friendly manner and specifically emphasized that, of course, our government will try to prevent any actions that compromise both Harriman himself and his family. At the same time, I especially took revenge that Harriman enjoys the respect of the head of our state. These warnings were neither a threat nor an attempt at any kind of blackmail. On the contrary, our goal was to show him that there could be no question of any provocations against him. The fact that we discussed with him not only diplomatic, but also purely personal issues, moreover, of a rather scrupulous nature, showed only the degree of our confidence. But Harriman did not react to my warnings, showing where

great concern about the delivery of vodka and black caviar for the participants of the upcoming conference in the Crimea.

Speaking with Radziwill, Harriman noted that Yalta should give the green light to promising business ventures in post-war Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Continuing the conversation, I said that the meaning of Radziwill's secret stay in Moscow was to rule out all sorts of rumors that Goering's friend was about to appear in Sweden or England as a courier from Hitler with peace proposals. Radziwill not only immediately translated my words, but also supported me on his part, confirming his intention to appear in Europe only after the end of the war. Since I spoke at the meeting as a high-ranking official of the government, on behalf of our leadership I presented Harriman with a gift - a tea set.

My conversation with Harriman at the Aragvi and then at the Sovetskaya Hotel (at that time Western delegations visiting Moscow used to stay there) was recorded on tape. Then we listened to the recording, trying to find any additional touches in it to create a psychological portrait of the members of the American delegation at the conference in Yalta. These psychological nuances were more important for Stalin than intelligence data: the possibility of establishing personal contacts with the heads of Western delegations, Roosevelt and Churchill, seemed to him decisive. Indeed, the personal relationships of the world leaders played a colossal role in the discussion and adoption of the documents at the Yalta Conference.

In November 1945, while Stalin was on holiday in the Crimea, Harriman tried unsuccessfully to meet with him to discuss plans for economic and political cooperation. I was told how he came to Molotov and convinced him that he was our friend, who for several years invariably discussed the most sensitive issues with Soviet officials and personally with Stalin. However, this time Molotov remained indifferent and purely official. This means that from now on Harriman is no longer of interest to our side and access to the highest echelons of power is forbidden to him.

Harriman left Moscow at the end of January 1946

In the summer of 1941, Harry Hopkins, an adviser to President Roosevelt, suggested that our ambassador in Washington, Umansky, establish a confidential relationship. This, as Umansky told me, was done on the direct orders of the president. In December 1941, Stalin appointed Litvinov as ambassador to the United States instead of Umansky, and Hopkins immediately established close relations with him. So close that Litvinov often visited Hopkins at home. Litvinov himself told me how once, when an adviser to the American president was ill, he sat by his bed and discussed current problems with him. Both Umansky and Litvinov, whom I meet in Moscow, also, according to them, established informal relations with employees of the State Department and the White House war.

Before any official visit, the list of future negotiators was handed over to the NKVD (or NKGB) on a mandatory basis. In this case, I received such a list of all members of the American delegation at the Yalta Conference. It contained detailed information about each of the participants, including connections with us and attitudes towards our country. The materials I received for compiling a psychological profile contained information about personal qualities and a top-secret appendix about the possibility of their undercover cooperation with Soviet intelligence.

One US official with whom we had a confidential relationship was an official member of the US delegation to the Yalta talks. This man's name was Alger Hiss, he was a confidant of Hopkins. In conversations with Umansky, and then with Litvinov, Hiss revealed Washington's plans. In addition, he was very close to some of the "sources" who collaborated with the Soviet military intelligence, and with our active agents in the United States. By special

We knew through our military information channels that we had received a message from Hiss that the Americans were ready to come to an agreement with us about the future of Europe.

On our list, next to Hiss's name, it was indicated that he had great sympathy for the Soviet Union and was a supporter of post-war cooperation between the American and Soviet governments. However, nothing was said about the fact that Hiss, a State Department official, is an agent of our intelligence.

In June 1993, I spoke with one of my former colleagues, who at one time was a military intelligence resident in London and New York. According to him, Hiss became a source of information for our group in Washington in the early and mid-1930s. This group, led by Russian-born economist Nathan Silvermaster, included both our agents and those who were sources of confidential information, but whose activities were not recorded in any recruitment documents, since none of them signed commitments to cooperation. In the 1930s, registration and recruitment obligations in contacts with influential people in the West who sympathized with us were of no particular importance. In the 1940s, a strict procedure for documenting cooperation with Soviet intelligence was already introduced.

Undercover reports translated into Russian, as a rule, we reported to Stalin or Molotov without any comments. The only appendix to the document could be a statement that this agent or source is trustworthy or not trustworthy, or that we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the data in the special message. As far as I remember, although I may be mistaken, Hiss figured as the source of "Mars", but he had not the slightest idea about this.

When Hiss was accused of spying for the USSR in the late 1940s, no convincing evidence of his guilt was presented, and there could not be any. Hiss was close to people who collaborated with Soviet military intelligence, perhaps he was the source of information transmitted to our special services, but he was never our agent in the full sense of the word. One of my old acquaintances, a veteran of our military intelligence, adhered to the same point of view. He told me that on the eve of Yalta, Hopkins and Headl, the US Secretary of State, on behalf of Roosevelt, had pushed Hiss into contacts with the Soviet representatives, knowing of his sympathies for the Soviet Union. It was important for the American authorities to have Hiss as an intermediate way, which can episodically convey important unofficial information to the Soviet ruling circles.

A friend of mine, a retired military intelligence officer, recalls that in the Roosevelt administration we had a very important source of information. This was Roosevelt's intelligence assistant, who was on bad terms with William Donovan and Edgar Hoover, the heads of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) and the FBI, respectively. My friend is inclined to think that Roosevelt and Hopkins, for their part, also did not fully trust the OSS and the FBI. Roosevelt in those years created his own unofficial intelligence network, the services of which he used to carry out sensitive missions. Hiss, like Hopkins and Harriman, was part of this narrow circle of confidants.

This, perhaps, explains why Truman, who succeeded Roosevelt, did not immediately remove Hiss. The lenient sentence he received, the obscure charges leveled against him, and finally the neutral stance taken by the American government in the case, show that Hiss knew too much that could reflect on the reputation of both Roosevelt and Truman. My friend, a veteran military intelligence officer, believes that there is far more material on Hiss in the FBI archives than was presented at trial, perhaps there was a tacit agreement between Truman and Hoover to limit the charge against Hiss to only perjury.

It should be kept in mind that 80 percent of political intelligence does not come from agents, but from confidential sources.

Usually these sources are detected by counterintelligence, but it is always problematic to prove the fact of espionage. The line of Soviet intelligence has always been that members of the Communist Party should not be involved in our intelligence activities. If the source of information was too important for us, then such a person was ordered to leave the party in order to demonstrate his disillusionment with communism.

It is interesting to follow how diplomatic contacts between American and Soviet representatives changed. During the war years, Hopkins and Harriman maintained personal, informal and diplomatic relations with the Soviet leadership - I believe that they acted on the instructions of Roosevelt himself. As for Stalin, he resorted to unofficial diplomacy only in the first period of the war, using Umansky and Litvinov. Once he had established a personal relationship with Roosevelt in Tehran, it was no longer necessary for him to keep Litvinov in America, an experienced diplomat who spoke fluent English, French and German. The appointment of Gromyko as ambassador to America in 1944 indicated that personal contact had been established between Stalin and Roosevelt. He no longer needed strong intermediaries - such as Litvinov or Umansky.

Later, Stalin parted ways with everyone who maintained unofficial contacts with Roosevelt's envoys. The message that Roosevelt's personal interpreter is the son of one of the leaders of the White Guard terrorist organization "League of Aubert", who participated in the assassination of the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, Voikov, we received just two days before the start of the Yalta conference. I immediately reported this to Bogdan Kobulov, the same Beria who was in Yalta, and on his orders, Kruglov, who was officially responsible for guarding the delegations and was in regular contact with the American and British intelligence services, informed the head of the American security service. The interpreter was immediately taken from Yalta to an American ship that was anchored off the Crimean coast.

Initially, the Soviet leadership seriously considered the participation of the USSR in the Marshall Plan. I remember my meeting with Molotov's assistant Vetrov before he left for Paris with Molotov to take part in negotiations on the future of Europe. This was in June 1947. Vetrov, my old friend from work in Riga in 1940, told me that our policy is based on cooperation with the Western allies in the implementation of the "Marshall Plan", meaning primarily the revival of war-torn industry in Ukraine, Belarus and Leningrad .

Suddenly, our political course has changed dramatically. I was invited to the Information Committee. Vyshinsky, who acted as chairman of the committee in Molotov's absence, and his deputy Fedotov reported that important information had been received from an agent codenamed "Stuart" (it was Donald McLean). As first secretary at the British embassy in Washington, and acting head of the embassy's office, McLean had access to important secret correspondence. The report stated that the goal of the Marshall Plan was to establish American economic dominance in Europe. The new international economic organization for the restoration of European industry will be under the control of American capital. The source of this information was none other than British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. This plan predetermined the future difference in the economic development of the countries of Eastern and Western Europe.

Vyshinsky wanted to immediately report this message to Stalin. However, before doing this, he had to make sure once again of the reliability of the agent from whom the information came, and not only in McLean himself, but also in other agents who were part of the Cambridge group - Philby, Burges, Cairncross and Blunt. Vyshinsky feared that these people were compromised by their past connections with Orlov. Are they now playing a double game?

In 1939, after Orlov defected to the West, it was I who gave the order to

renewed contact with Philby and McLean. Since this telegram was kept in the MacLean file with my signature, Vyshinsky asked me exactly whether it was possible to trust such an agent as MacLean. I replied that I was responsible for the directives I had signed, but I only had information about MacLean's work until 1939, and since 1942 I had no information about him at all, while I added: "Every source of important information must necessarily regularly reviewed and re-evaluated, so the Cambridge group cannot be an exception."

At the end of the conversation, I reminded Vyshinsky that Stalin personally ordered that The NKVD did not search for Orlov abroad and did not persecute members of his family.

After my reminder, Vyshinsky seemed to be convinced that there were no grounds for distrusting the reliability of our agent, which means that the message should be reported to Stalin. If McLean's information was, so to speak, stinky, then Vyshinsky understood that he could wash his hands of it by citing Stalin's order to leave Orlov alone. In addition, our conversation with Vyshinsky took place in the presence of Fedotov, who could be used as a witness against me if McLean's information turned out to be false.

McLean's report also stated that the "Marshall Plan" provided for the termination of Germany's payment of reparations. This immediately alerted the Soviet leadership, since at that time reparations were, in essence, the only source of external funds for restoring the national economy destroyed by the war.

In Yalta and Potsdam, the parties agreed that Germany would pay reparations in the form of equipment, industrial machines and machinery, cars, trucks and building materials regularly - for five years. These deliveries were especially important for our chemical and machine-building industries, which were in need of modernization. Moreover, the use of supplies in the Soviet Union was not subject to international control, which meant that we could use them for any purpose that we deem necessary.

According to the Marshall Plan, the implementation of all projects of foreign economic assistance was to be under international, in fact, American control. This plan might be acceptable; if it were an addition to the regular flow of reparations from Germany and Finland. The message received from McLean, however, made it clear that the British and American governments wanted, through the "Marshall Plan", to suspend reparations to the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe and to provide international assistance based not on bilateral agreements, but on international control.

Such a situation was absolutely unacceptable for us, it would interfere with our control over Eastern Europe. And this meant that the communist parties, already established in Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, would be deprived of the economic levers of power. It is significant that half a year after the "Marshall Plan" was rejected by us, the multi-party system in Eastern Europe was eliminated with our active participation.

On Stalin's instructions, Vyshinsky sent a coded message to Molotov, who was in Paris, summarizing McLean's message. Based on this information, Stalin invited Molotov to oppose the implementation of the "Marshall Plan" in Eastern Europe.

This plan was opposed in various ways. For example, Vyshinsky personally negotiated with the Romanian King Mihai about his abdication in exchange for guaranteed living conditions in Mexico. We also awarded him the Order of "Victory", the Romanian government gave him a high life allowance.

A unique situation has developed in Bulgaria. During the war, I often met with Georgy Dimitrov, who headed the Comintern before he was

dissolved in 1943. During the year he was the head of the international department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. When Dimitrov returned to Bulgaria in 1944, he allowed the tsarina and her son, heir to the throne, to leave the country, taking all family valuables with them. Knowing what a threat the monarchist Krut in exile could pose, Dimitrov decided to destroy all political opposition within the country: key figures in the former parliament and the tsarist government of Bulgaria were repressed and liquidated. As a result of this action, Dimitrov became the only communist leader in Eastern Europe who did not have an organized opposition among the emigration that really claimed power. Dimitrov's successors enjoyed the fruits of this position for more than thirty years. General Ivan Vinarov, one of the leaders of intelligence in Bulgaria, who worked under me in the 4th directorate during the war years, later, when we met with him in Moscow in the 70s, said: we used your experience and destroyed all dissidents before how they could escape to the West.

The situation in Czechoslovakia was different.

Our resident in Prague, Boris Rybkin, by the end of 1947, created an illegal residency operating under the guise of an export-import company for the production of costume jewelry, using it as a base for possible sabotage operations in Western Europe and the Middle East. Czech costume jewelry is known all over the world, and this made it easier for Rybkin to create subsidiaries of "distributors" in the most important capitals of Western Europe and the Middle East. Rybkin's tasks included using the Kurdish movement against the Shah of Iran and the rulers of Iraq, King Faisal II and Prime Minister Nuri Said. At the end of 1947, Rybkin died in a car accident in Prague, but by this time his organization had already begun to actively operate.

In 1948, on the eve of the transfer of power from Edvard Beneš to Klement Gottwald, Molotov summoned me to his Kremlin office and ordered me to go to Prague and, having arranged a secret meeting with Beneš, invite him to leave his post with dignity, transferring power to Gottwald, the leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. To remind Benes of his close unofficial ties to the Kremlin, I had to show him a receipt for ten thousand dollars, signed by his secretary in 1938, when Benes and his people needed the money to move to the UK. Otherwise, I was instructed to tell him that we would find a way to organize a leak of rumors about the circumstances of his flight from the country and the financial assistance provided to him for this, a secret agreement on cooperation between Czech and Soviet intelligence, signed in 1935 in Moscow, a secret agreement on the transfer to us Carpathian Ukraine and about the participation of Benes himself in the preparation of a political coup in 1938 and an assassination attempt on the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia.

Molotov emphasized that I was not authorized to conduct any negotiations on questions of Czech policy: my task was only to convey our conditions, leaving Benes the right to decide how he would fulfill them. Molotov repeated his instructions very clearly, gazing at me through his pince-nez. I replied that I considered such a delicate task more suitable for a person who personally knew Benes and was directly connected with him through his previous work. Such a person was Zubov, our resident in Prague in the prewar years, whom Stalin and Molotov once imprisoned because in 1938 he reported the failure of Beneš's plan to rely on dubious people in Belgrade and, moreover, did not give them money. Molotov said to this that I personally carried out the assignment with the involvement of the necessary people, but how - this is already at my discretion. It was clear that he did not want to take responsibility for what methods I would use: he was only interested in the result. I had to leave Prague twelve hours after talking with Benes, without waiting for an answer.

Together with Zubov (since September 1946, Zubov was retired; after systematic beatings in prison, which the investigator Rhodes subjected him to, he became

actually disabled: he limped quite noticeably and walked leaning on a stick) we arrived in Prague by train in January 1948, but we did not stay at the embassy, but at a modest hotel, where we introduced ourselves as members of the Soviet trade mission. Our special-purpose brigade - 400 people dressed in civilian clothes - was already in Prague. This group was secretly transported to support and protect Gottwald.

The official Soviet representatives already exerted very strong pressure on Beneš, and here we also had to make our contribution. Zubov and I spent a whole week in Prague, and during this time Zubov, who before the war met with Benes in the presence of our ambassador Alexandrovsky, managed, using all his skill and past connections, to meet Benes for fifteen minutes at his residence, located in the very center of Prague. He conveyed the meaning of our message to the president, saying that the country would undergo fundamental changes regardless of whether the current leadership remained or not, but, in his opinion, Beneš was the only one who could ensure a smooth and bloodless transfer of power.

As instructed, Zubov told Beneš that he was not expecting a response from him, but merely passing him an unofficial message. According to Zubov, Beneš seemed like a broken, sick man who would do everything he could to avoid an explosion of violence and unrest in Czechoslovakia.

Having completed our mission, we boarded the Prague-Moscow train. As soon as the train crossed the border, I immediately, using the communication channels of the local regional party committee, sent, as I was ordered, a cipher to Molotov and a copy of it to Abakumov, the then Minister of State Security: "Lev received an audience and transmitted a message" ("Lev" is a code Zubov's name). A month later, Benes peacefully ceded the reins of government to Gottwald.

At the end of the war, my official position was further strengthened: the 4th Directorate, which I led, made a generally recognized contribution to our victory. Among the twenty-eight Chekists who were awarded the highest award of the country - the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, twenty-three were officers and employees of my department. In December 1945, I had the rare honor of delivering an official report at the annual meeting of the staff of the NKGB-NKVD apparatus, dedicated to the next anniversary of the founding of the Cheka. Soon I was elected a member of the party committee of the Ministry of State Security (MGB): in the spring of 1946, the People's Commissariat for State Security (NKGB) became known as a ministry.

Back in July 1945, immediately after the end of the war, on the eve of the Potsdam Conference, Stalin signed a government decree on the introduction of military ranks similar to the Red Army for officers and senior staff of the state security and internal affairs (senior major - colonel; commissar of state security - major general; commissar State Security of the 3rd rank - lieutenant general, 2nd rank - colonel general, 1st rank - army general; General Commissar - Marshal). Beria received the rank of marshal in July 1945. By the same decree of the government, Fitin and I were given the rank of lieutenant general, and Eitingon - major general. Thus, for the first time, my name and Eitingon's were mentioned on the pages of our press among the leading workers of the NKVD, who were awarded general ranks.

Meanwhile, the "cold war" took on a fierce character, which at the end of 1947 led to an important reorganization of the structures of our intelligence agencies. The war showed that political and military intelligence was not always qualified to evaluate and analyze all the information that it received through its channels. And then Molotov, who, before the Yalta Conference, several times chaired meetings of the heads of intelligence services, proposed to unite them into one centralized organization. Stalin agreed with this proposal - this is how the Information Committee was born, which included the 1st Directorate of the MGB and the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense (GRU). As for the Ministry of State Security, it was also decided to keep a special intelligence and sabotage service in its composition - in case of a possible

wars or local military conflicts in the Middle East, Europe, the Balkans or the Far East. A similar special unit was retained in the Ministry of Defense.

Looking back at the past, I see that the quite sensible idea of creating a single analytical center for processing everyday intelligence information has not been implemented in practice as it should. Operational management of reconnaissance operations should not have been transferred to the wrong hands. As for the new Information Committee, its tasks should have been limited to the analysis of intelligence materials.

The effectiveness and thoughtfulness of foreign intelligence operations of the security agencies and the General Staff of the Armed Forces depended to a large extent on the interaction of these services. The intelligence service of the MGB cooperated with counterintelligence, and the GRU was in contact with the relevant departments of the Directorates of the General Staff. Neither the GRU nor the MGB intelligence, distinguished by high professionalism in carrying out tasks of a military or political nature, themselves determined the priorities and goals of their activities regarding the penetration of our special services and the introduction of our agents into enemy facilities. Under the new system, any requests for assistance from the high military command or The ministries of state security first came to Stalin, and then to Molotov as the head of the Information Committee, and this, naturally, increased the flow of bureaucratic paperwork and inevitable approvals, making the decision-making process

The former intelligence department of the NKVD-NKGB, which was the main instrument for ensuring the interests of state security abroad, has essentially turned into an appendage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose main activity is diplomacy, not intelligence. Like the Information Committee, the ministry was under the control of Molotov. As a result, such operations, which were previously successfully carried out by the NKVD-NKGB, such as infiltrating emigre organizations, infiltrating our agents into British and American intelligence services, and cooperating with counterintelligence agencies in suppressing nationalist movements in the Baltic states and Western Ukraine, began to noticeably lose their significance. The Information Committee was established at the same time as the formation of the CIA in the United States. It was an attempt—deeply wrong! — respond in a similar way to the ongoing changes in America.

Even now, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, I am still convinced that the effective functioning of the secret services in Russia depends on their close cooperation with the security agencies. We do not have a solid operational independent base for the work of, say, the tax police, the customs service, and so on. In the West, all these services have serious levers of control over important areas of society. In Russia, these services are just being born. At the same time, the body for the analysis and evaluation of intelligence data should act independently, directly serve the leadership of the country, and not be subordinate to bureaucrats and certain influential politicians or heads of special services.

This conclusion was not reached immediately, but gradually, by 1951, more precisely, by 1952, when Stalin ordered that all operational intelligence work be again concentrated in the intelligence department of the Ministry of Defense and the new 1st Main Directorate (foreign intelligence) of the Ministry of State Security. The Information Committee began to play the role of an analytical center for processing military and political intelligence materials. Burges and McLean started working there when they managed to escape to the Soviet Union.

Perhaps for this reason, in the 1960s, Khrushchev created a department of international information under the Central Committee of the CPSU to analyze and process materials on foreign economic and foreign policy issues. After the events of August 1991, Gorbachev and Yeltsin made the same mistake: instead of developing a mechanism for social democratic and parliamentary control over the activities of the special services, they combined political and operational work and created a foreign intelligence service, which in its

foreign activities cannot but rely on counterintelligence materials. The lack of effective coordination of actions with internal security agencies, tax police and customs remains a weak point in its work.

The Committee of Information mentioned above was headed first by Molotov, then for three months by Vyshinsky, and after him by Zorin, later our representative in the United Nations. I happened to be present at several meetings under Vyshinsky: until the last day of his tenure as chairman of the committee, he managed not to personally sign a single document of any importance, shifting all responsibility onto his deputies. At the same time, he invariably repeated: "In such a serious matter, I am completely incompetent."

According to him, he twice spoke to Comrade Stalin about his incompetence in matters of intelligence activities. Every time he visited Stalin, Vyshinsky took his deputy with him. He quite frankly wanted someone else to share responsibility for decisions with him: this gave him the opportunity, in case of failure, to shift the blame to another. By the way, Vyshinsky was much more competent than he tried to imagine. Somehow, in an informal setting, he admitted that intelligence, as a rule, is associated with troubles, and not with success in work. He was right: in our business it is really impossible to rely only on success - the risk is always quite high. In the end, he convinced Stalin that he should be freed from this burden of worries. Vyshinsky's request was granted by appointing Zorin to the post of chairman of the Information Committee.

Even before these changes, in June 1946, unexpectedly for me, Merkulov was dismissed from the post of Minister of State Security. There were vague hints that the special services, they say, had not coped with their duties, having made mistakes in holding the traditional May Day demonstration. It was about the traffic jams that arose during the celebration of May Day on the streets of the capital. It soon became quite clear to me that this was just a pretext to remove Merkulov.

After the end of the war, the problem of reorganizing the Armed Forces came to the fore. Following this, Stalin suggested that the Politburo review the activities of the state security agencies and set new tasks for them. Later, Mamulov and Ludvigov told me that Merkulov was required to submit to the Politburo a plan for the reorganization of the Ministry of State Security. At the meeting, Beria, according to them (both of them, as I mentioned, headed the secretariat of Beria), attacked Merkulov for failing to determine the direction in the work of counterintelligence in the post-war period. Stalin joined him, accusing Merkulov of complete incompetence.

At the meeting, where Merkulov's deputies were present, they were supposed to discuss the new tasks of the Ministry of State Security. Military counterintelligence (SMERSH), which during the war years was under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Defense, headed by Abakumov and controlled by Stalin, returned to the Ministry of State Security, since Stalin ceased to head the People's Commissariat of Defense. Bulganin, a purely civilian who had no military education, was appointed Minister of Defense - he was urgently promoted to marshal, after which this appointment followed.

Then, at the meeting, an interesting scene occurred. Stalin asked why the head of military counterintelligence could not simultaneously be deputy minister of state security. Merkulov immediately agreed with him that Abakumov be appointed First Deputy Minister. At the same time, Stalin sarcastically remarked that Merkulov behaved like a double-dealer in the Politburo and it would be advisable to replace him as Minister of State Security. It seems that Merkulov made a mistake by agreeing so easily with Stalin's proposal, but in fact Stalin was simply looking for a suitable excuse to remove him. Stalin also had a candidate ready - Ogoltsov, an honest man, but a provincial who had never worked in the Center; only six months since he was transferred from the Krasnoyarsk State Security Department to Moscow. Ogoltsov begged Stalin not to appoint him to this position. As an honest communist, he told the Politburo, I

I am completely unsuited for such a high post, because I lack the necessary knowledge and experience for such a responsible job. Then Stalin immediately proposed to appoint Abakumov as minister. Beria and Molotov remained silent, but Politburo member Zhdanov warmly supported the idea.

A week later, Eitingon and I were summoned to see Abakumov.

"Almost two years ago," he began, "I made the decision never to work with you. But Comrade Stalin, when I offered to release you from your duties, said that you should continue to work in your former position. So, - the new minister concluded, - let's work together.

At first, Eitingon and I felt relieved—his sincerity won us over. However, subsequent events showed that we should not indulge in too much complacency. A few days later, we were summoned to a meeting of a special commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which was chaired by the new curator of the security agencies, Secretary of the Central Committee A. Kuznetsov.

The commission considered "criminal mistakes" and cases of negligence committed by the former leadership of the Ministry of State Security. This was a common practice: whenever there was a change of leadership in the ministries (defence, security or foreign affairs), the Central Committee appointed a commission to review the activities of the old leadership and transfer cases.

Among the issues that the Kuznetsov commission studied was the following: the suspension by Merkulov of the criminal prosecution of Trotsky's supporters in 1941-1945. Unexpectedly, suspicious connections between me and Eitingon surfaced with well-known "enemies of the people" - the heads of intelligence of the OGPU-NKVD in the 30s. Abakumov directly accused me and Eitingon of "criminal frauds": we rescued our "friends" from prison in 1941 and helped them avoid the punishment they deserved. What was said outraged me to the core: it was about slandering the heroes of the war, people devoted to our cause. Furious, I cut him off abruptly.

"I will not allow boots to trample on the memory of the heroes who died in the war, those who showed courage and devotion to their homeland in the fight against fascism. In the presence of a representative of the Central Committee, I will prove that the cases of these Chekists were fabricated as a result of Yezhov's criminal activities," I declared in a fit of temper.

Kuznetsov (he knew me personally - we met at the neighboring dacha, at the widow of Emelyan Yaroslavsky), intervening, hastened to say that the matter was closed. The discussion ended there and I left.

Returning to my office, I immediately summoned Serebryansky, Zubov, Prokopyuk, Medvedev and other employees who were arrested and dismissed in the 1930s to the office and suggested that they immediately resign. Particularly vulnerable was the situation of Zubov and Serebryansky, whose affairs were conducted at one time by Abakumov.

In July 1946, for the first time in eight years, I took a vacation and went with my wife and children near Riga, to the Baltic resort of Majori. At first we lived in a military sanatorium, but the famous Latvian writer Vilis Latsis, who at one time was the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Latvia and then the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, invited us to his residence. When I returned to Moscow after a vacation, the head of the secretariat of the Ministry of State Security, Chernov, informed me that the 4th department, which I led, was disbanded. Since our unit no longer existed, I was instructed by the Minister to submit to him my proposals for the use of personnel. In fact, I had no room for maneuver: on the one hand, Molotov, who intended to create an Information Committee, and on the other, Abakumov, the Minister of State Security.

I was still head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Government's Special Committee on the Atomic Problem. I learned from Ogoltsov: Abakumov was annoyed that I still hold this post and have direct access to the Kremlin. He couldn't do anything about it.

to do, since the atomic problem did not belong to his competence.

The new Information Committee was supposed to combine military and political intelligence, which could not but affect the work of the Special Intelligence Bureau on the Atomic Problem, which coordinated the activities of the GRU and the MGB to collect intelligence related to nuclear weapons. What should this unit be doing now? At the end of 1946, this question was on edge, and I still could not manage to talk to Beria, who was the deputy head of the government and a member of the Politburo. In the end, I called him and asked what the status should be and to whom the intelligence bureau of the Government's Special Committee on "problem number one" should be subordinated in connection with the organization of the Information Committee.

Beria's answer puzzled me.

"You have your own minister to deal with such issues," he said sharply and hung up.

- I understood that if I still have a minister - Abakumov, then he will never support me.

That is why I immediately proposed that the functions of the 2nd Intelligence Bureau be transferred to the Committee of Information. Given the importance of the atomic problem, these issues were to be dealt with by an independent department of scientific and technical intelligence. I recommended that Vasilevsky be appointed to the post of head of the scientific and technical intelligence department. Fedotov, who first replaced Fitin as MGB intelligence chief and then became Molotov's deputy in the Information Committee, agreed, but Vasilevsky worked for only a few months. He was removed from the Committee of Information during the anti-Semitic campaign that began in the country, although he was allowed to retire in 1948 with the rank of colonel after years of service.

My official position was determined only in the autumn of 1946, when by the decision of the Central Committee and the government, a special intelligence and sabotage service was created under the USSR Minister of State Security (since 1950 it was called the MGB Bureau No. 1 for sabotage work abroad), and I was appointed chief, and Eitingon my deputy. My task was to organize an independent service that could, in the event of war, be transformed in the shortest possible time into a body directing combat work. It was also about actions in the event of the emergence of hotbeds of tension within the Soviet Union, which could develop into armed conflicts in connection with rampant banditry in the Baltic States and Western Ukraine.

I retained my position as head of an independent unit within the system of the Ministry of State Security. Abakumov showed enough tact not to deprive me of the privileges that I received during the war years: they kept my state dacha, I continued to be included in the list of persons who received a monthly monetary remuneration in addition to their official salary, and also had the right to special services and meals in the Kremlin canteen. My situation had changed in only one respect: I was no longer invited to the regular meetings of department heads chaired by the minister, as was the case during the war years. It is interesting that the board in the MGB under Stalin was never created. We practically did not communicate with Abakumov, until one fine day I suddenly heard on the phone Abakumov's voice, demanding and confident as usual.

"I have heard rumors that your sons are planning an assassination attempt on Comrade Stalin.

- What do you have in mind?

"What I said," Abakumov replied.

- Do you know how old they are? I asked.

"What difference does it make?" the Minister replied.

"Comrade Minister, I don't know who reported this to you, but such accusations just incredible. After all, my youngest son is five years old, and the eldest is eight.

Abakumov hung up. And during the year I did not hear a single word from him on topics that did not concern work. He never met with me even though I was under his direct supervision. All issues were resolved only by phone.

In late 1946 - early 1947, a major reorganization of the intelligence department continued: in July 1946, the 4th department was liquidated; in late 1946 - early 1947, the intelligence department of the MGB was transferred to the Information Committee, created only in March 1947 - for half a year there was a "section of the intelligence apparatus." Worked in 4-man management under my command throughout the war, Fisher, who was in charge of the radio intelligence service, was transferred to the Information Committee. With the help of Ogoltsov, Abakumov's first deputy, I managed to convince Fedotov, Molotov's deputy, that my service needed its own radio center. The decision made that the committee and the bureau should use the services of the same radio center did not please me. In the committee, Korotkov was appointed head of the department for working with illegal immigrants - it was he who developed a plan to use Fischer (later to become famous under the pseudonym "Rudolf Abel") as the head of a network of illegal immigrants in the United States and Western Europe.

Korotkov's plan had to get my approval first, since one of his main tasks was to penetrate military bases and installations in Bergen (Norway), Le Havre and Cherbourg (France). I spoke out strongly against it, because I thought it would be much more useful if Fischer, working abroad, improved our radio communication system, instead of taking unnecessary risks by managing a network of illegal immigrants. Illegal radio operators and illegal agents must either be husband and wife, or work separately from each other, communicating with the help of a liaison, in order to minimize the risk of being captured together and thereby ruin the entire network. It was the non-compliance with this rule that led to tragic losses in the Red Chapel during the war years. Korotkov, in essence, insisted that Fischer combine the management of the agent network and control over the radio operators.

The decision to send Fischer abroad was made only at the end of 1947. I suggested to Fedotov that he be sent to Western Europe and North America in order to check on the spot what our intelligence network had in France, Norway, the United States and Canada. He gave the wives was to provide access to military installations, depots and ammunition depots. We desperately needed to know how quickly the Americans would be able to transfer reinforcements to Europe if the "cold war" escalated into a hot one.

Eitingon, in turn, suggested that Fischer obtain US citizenship and establish his own radio communication system with Moscow and personally maintain it. According to legend, he had to lead a free lifestyle and not make himself dependent on a radio operator. He himself was a very highly qualified radio operator. I agreed with Eitingon, emphasizing that Fischer should never rely on old sources of information. He must establish new confidential contacts, and then check those people whom we used in the 30s and 40s: in each individual case, he himself will decide whether to get in touch with them or not, that is, we will not tell them anything about the appearance of their new curator in the West.

The priority in the United States was the West Coast for us - it was there, on Long Beach, that military installations were located. Fischer was instructed to report to us about American military deliveries to the Chinese Nationalists, who at the time were still fighting fierce battles with the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Fisher managed to create a new intelligence network that united agents in California and illegal immigrants hiding under the guise of Czechoslovak emigrants in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. His people reported on the movement of military equipment and ammunition, which were sent from American ports on the Pacific coast to ports in the Far East. Illegals quite often came from Latin America to the United States on business related to their business, which was an excellent cover for them. All of them were

real specialists in sabotage operations, who gained extensive experience during the guerrilla war against the Germans. This Latin American group included Grinchenko, Filonenko, and Trotsky's former secretary Maria de Las Heras (code name "Patria"). Having received an appropriate order from the Center, they could also attract California agents for sabotage operations.

Colonel Filonenko and his wife, an intelligence major, lived with their three children in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, posing as Czech businessmen who had fled Shanghai from the Chinese Communists. If necessary, the Filonenkos could use the Chinese living in California to smuggle explosives onto American ships carrying military supplies to the Far East. To minimize the risk, Filonenko preferred regular visits to the United States over permanent residence there. Fortunately, the order to carry out sabotage on American ships never came.

Fisher's other spy network is German immigrants on the East Coast of the United States. In particular, Kurt Wiesel, a former assistant to Ernst Wollweber, a specialist in sabotage in pre-war Europe. In America, he managed to advance his career and take the position of chief engineer of a shipbuilding company that gave access to classified information. His company was either near Norfolk or near Philadelphia, and he had extensive connections in the German colony there. With the help of dockers and service personnel who needed additional funds, Wiesel created a reliable group to carry out acts of sabotage. In 1949-

In the 1950s, he had several safe houses located in close proximity to the port facilities.

In the late 1940s, there was no small temptation for some to supply Wiesel and Filonenko with explosive devices, but I strongly objected to this proposal, believing that there was no need to expose our people to unjustified risk. When the crisis in the Korean War reached its climax in the autumn of 1950, our specialists came from Latin America to the United States, who could assemble explosive devices on the spot. They spent two months in the United States, but they never had a chance to use their abilities, because the order from the Center did not follow, and our officers safely returned to Argentina, and from there through Vienna to Moscow.

During Fischer's stay in Moscow, who came on vacation, Abakumov or, it seems, Molotov raised the question of searching for Orlov. I strongly objected, recalling that the Central Committee forbade us to persecute him. In addition, Orlov will immediately notice surveillance or any attempts by our agents to find approaches to his relatives. The idea of using Fischer to search for Orlov was submitted by Korotkov (code name "Long") - at one time it was assumed that he would be Orlov's assistant in managing the intelligence network in France, and he was aware of plans to use Fischer as a radio operator with Orlov, and unrealized in the 1930s.

Later, it was Korotkov who was responsible for Fischer's failure. In 1955, he sent an agent, Reino Heihanen, a Finn by origin, to Fischer as an assistant. He liked to drink and, having wasted operational funds, violated the rules of conspiracy, and when they decided to recall him to Moscow, he remained in America and betrayed Fischer (Rudolf Abel).

Since we never carried out plans of sabotage in the United States during the Korean War, Fisher was transferred to the Bureau of Illegal Intelligence of the Committee of Information, although I still had certain sights of him. In 1951 or 1952, the new Minister of State Security, Ignatiev, ordered that my bureau, together with the GRU, prepare a plan for sabotage operations on American military installations and bases in case of war or a possible limited military conflict near our borders. We identified one hundred targets, breaking them down into three categories: military bases hosting strategic air forces with nuclear weapons; military installations with depots of ammunition and military equipment intended to supply the American

armies in Europe and the Far East; and, finally, oil pipelines and fuel storage facilities to support American and NATO military units stationed in Europe, as well as their troops stationed in the Middle and Far East near our borders.

By the early 1950s we had agents at our disposal who could infiltrate military bases and installations in Norway, France, Austria, Germany, the United States and Canada. The plan was to establish constant surveillance and control of NATO strategic installations, recording any of their activity. Fisher, our chief illegal resident in the United States, was to establish permanent, reliable radio contact with our combat teams that we held in reserve in Latin America. If necessary, all these people were ready to cross the Mexican border to the United States under the guise of seasonal workers.

In Europe, meanwhile, Prince Gagarin, our longtime agent, who posed as an anti-Soviet emigrant and served in Vlasov's army during the Second World War, moved from Germany to France. His task was to create a base for sabotage operations in seaports and military airfields, as well as a group of militants who, in the event of war or increased tension along our borders, would be able to disable the communication system and communications of the NATO headquarters located in Fontainebleau is a suburb of Paris. In Moscow, I was given a group of specialists in oil, oil refining and fuel storage, with whom we discussed the technical characteristics and location of the main oil pipelines in Western Europe. Then we gave our officers the task of recruiting agents-saboteurs from among the service personnel of oil refineries and oil pipelines.

In 1952, I received a message that Fischer had received US citizenship and thus gained a reliable "roof". Now he could engage, quite officially, in one of his professions, which he indicated - an artist or a free artist. He managed to equip three radio apartments: between New York and Norfolk, near the Great Lakes and on the West Coast. This is the last thing I heard about him before my arrest and until the moment when he was exchanged for the American military pilot Powers, who was serving his sentence in the Vladimir prison, where I was at that time.

Ignatiev, who replaced Abakumov as Minister of State Security, and Minister of Defense Marshal Vasilevsky in 1952 approved a plan of action against American and NATO strategic military bases in the event of war or local conflicts that got out of control. The plan provided that the first action in the event of a military conflict in Europe should be the destruction of the communications of the NATO headquarters. This plan was signed by me and the then head of the GRU, General Zakharov. However, my proposal to expand the base of operations of our agents in Paris, quite unexpectedly, ran into serious difficulties.

Khokhlov (code name "Svistun"), one of our veteran agents who actively worked during the war years, suddenly turned out to be "exposed" by enemy counterintelligence, later he fled to the West. Khokhlov was a professional actor, had a pleasant appearance (blond with blue eyes) and also spoke fluent German, which made him a very valuable intelligence agent for Maklyarsky and Ilyin. Before the war, Khokhlov basically "worked" among the Moscow intelligentsia. We planned to use him as a liaison for the intelligence network that was being created in Moscow in case the Germans occupied it. Pozanes, in Minsk, he acted as a German officer on vacation. He managed to make acquaintance with the female servants in the house of the German Gauleiter of Belarus. In 1943, a mine with a clockwork was planted under the mattress in the master's bedroom, and Gauleiter Kube died during the explosion.

I took Khokhlov with me to Romania, so that after living there for some time he would adapt to life in the West. Returning to Moscow, Khokhlov was in the reserve of the MGB in a group of secret agents who were planned to be used for "deep penetration" into the West. For everyone, he led the life of an ordinary Soviet student, receiving in fact

salary in my bureau, where he worked in the secret staff as a junior reconnaissance officer. His studies at the institute were interrupted by the war, and without entrance exams I got him a job at the philological faculty of Moscow State University. True, I could not help him get a good apartment, and, having married, he will continue to live in the old place, where it became especially crowded after his son was born. Since 1950, Khokhlov began to travel regularly to the West. We provided him with forged documents in the name of Hofbauer. In my bureau, Khokhlova was supervised by Tamara Ivanova, head of the department for the training of illegal immigrants. She successfully worked in Hungary and Austria, in 1945 she participated in the recruitment of Germans in the Berezino operation, but in 1948 she was recalled according to the directive to stop work and return all illegal immigrants from the socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

Khokhlov traveled several times to Germany, Austria and Switzerland. I wanted him to use his appearance as well as his artistry to get to know a ballerina of Georgian origin who danced at the Paris Opera, who was often seen in company with American officers and NATO headquarters staff. His good manners and gregariousness helped him set up an intelligence gathering team and, more importantly, organize a combat reserve for emergencies.

Khokhlov himself knew nothing about these plans. To my regret and indignation, he made an unforgivable mistake, which he himself did not take seriously at first. In my eyes, however, it canceled out his entire illegal career.

And here was the thing. Khokhlov tried to smuggle an accordion bought in Switzerland to Austria. The customs officers detained him, carefully checked his documents and took away his passport for several hours. As soon as Khokhlov reported what had happened to the Center, it became clear to me: the legend of Herr Hofbauer had come to an end. As a result of a seemingly insignificant incident at the border, Khokhlov attracted the attention of the authorities and probably ended up on the list of suspicious persons. From now on, Western intelligence services, even with a routine check, will no longer leave him alone. It is clear that he is no longer suitable for preparing military operations according to this legend. Khokhlov himself asked to be released from his duties, and I granted his request. His personal file must contain a report signed by me on his expulsion from the bureau.

Unfortunately, a little later he was sent as an operative and translator to our representative office in Germany, and in 1954, after my arrest, he was assigned to lead a group of militants to eliminate Okolovich, the head of the Russian nationalist organization NTS, which actively collaborated with the Germans during the war years. Khokhlov was detained, after which he was recruited by the CIA and became a "celebrity": the Americans used him as a "star" in an anti-Soviet propaganda show, forced him to play the role imposed on him. In the press, he was presented as an ardent supporter of the West, who decided to open up to Okalovich and tell the Americans about the impending assassination. The scandal erupted at a press conference in Frankfurt hosted by the CIA, where Khokhlov publicly made his revelations. Everyone was especially struck by the statement that his wife begged him not to carry out the task he had received. She was immediately arrested in Moscow, and she spent a year in prison with her son, after which she was exiled to Siberia for five years. Khokhlov described her as an anti-Soviet woman, who, they say, inspired him to escape. He also said that she was a deeply religious person. All this was not true. In 1957, he claimed that the KGB attempted to poison him by adding radioactive thallium to a cocktail, from which Khokhlov was saved by CIA doctors.

In May 1992, Khokhlov briefly appeared in Moscow after Yeltsin signed a decree pardoning him, but soon left for the United States again. Lord Batel of the European Parliament asked to speak to me about the Khokhlov case, and after the permission of the prosecutor's office, which reopened the investigation into Khokhlov's escape to the West, our conversation took place. His article appeared in the Daily Telegraph newspaper and in the Novoye Vremya magazine, but a number of very important details are missing.

One of Khokhlov's last bosses, Hero of the Soviet Union Mirkovsky, my

former deputy, told me that his ward did not want to go on the last assignment. They sent him not to liquidate Okolovich, but to prepare this murder, which a group of German agents was supposed to carry out. Khokhlov also did not want to take his wife and son with him to Austria. This meant that he had no intention of fleeing to the West at all. At a press conference held at the CIA, however, he said that he and his wife only dreamed of escaping. He gained notoriety in the Western press for his appeals to the governments of the "free world" to get his wife and son to go to him. Mirkovsky believes that it was a mistake on our part to allow Khokhlov to appear in the West with a passport, which once already attracted the attention of the special services. As we assume, he fell into the hands of the CIA, and he was forced to cooperate, but in this desperate situation, he still managed to send a conditional postcard to his wife. Although it was reviewed by the CIA, it still contained a warning signal that he was operating under "hostile control." He was not lucky - this signal was not noticed in time. Two other agents sent by us to work with Khokhlov were captured by the Americans: they forced him to

issue.

In his book *In the Name of Conscience* (1957), Khokhlov speaks of himself as a specialist in conducting partisan operations during the war years, but does not at all refer to an unsuccessful career in intelligence. By the way, while working for the CIA under special contracts (he taught the tactics of anti-guerrilla operations in Taiwan and South Vietnam), he also failed, because he had only the experience of an illegal agent, a recruiter of attractive women and informants, and not a specialist in combat operations. In my opinion, Khokhlov did exactly the right thing, subsequently choosing a scientific career and saying goodbye forever to the life of a scout. His family suffered from Khokhlov's transition to the West, his wife had a particularly hard time. She never said anything to her son about his father, who had defected to the West. The Khokhlovs' son became a professor of biology at Moscow University and traveled to the United States as a scientific expert. However, he met his father for the first time only when he appeared in their Moscow apartment in May 1992.

The origin of the Cold War is closely linked to the West's support for armed nationalist uprisings in the Baltic countries and Western Ukraine. Basically, the fight against them was carried out by local security agencies, but Moscow kept these operations under its control, providing weapons and advisers to help local authorities. I was involved in the maelstrom of events in Western Ukraine - my experience in the fight against Ukrainian nationalists was taken into account.

One day in the summer of 1946, I was summoned together with Abakumov to the Central Committee of the Party on Staraya Square. There, in the office of the Secretary of the Central Committee Kuznetsov, who, despite our formal acquaintance, was unusually official, I saw Khrushchev, the first secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine. Kuznetsov informed me that the Central Committee agreed with the proposal of Kaganovich and Khrushchev to secretly liquidate the leader of the Ukrainian nationalists, Shumsky. According to the Ministry of State Security of Ukraine, Shumsky established contacts with emigrant circles in the West, conducted behind-the-scenes intrigues in order to join the interim government being formed in exile -

Ukrainian Head Free Rada. It was also known that in conversation with his friends he showed disrespect towards Stalin, allowed Stalin to challenge Stalin's opinion of himself and put forward his own version of the discussion with Stalin on the composition of the Ukrainian government in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Shumsky was famous in nationalist circles as a man who was subjected to repression in the early 1930s in the course of the intra-party struggle. His name was anathematized at all party congresses in the republic, and he was released only because he was partially paralyzed and had to be released from prison for health reasons.

Shumsky was foolish, while in exile in Saratov, to make contact with Ukrainian cultural figures in Kyiv and abroad. According to Kuznetsov, he clearly overestimated his authority among Ukrainian emigrants and addressed a daring letter to

Stalin, threatening to commit suicide if he is not allowed to return to Ukraine. Khrushchev, for his part, added that, according to his information, Shumsky had already bought a train ticket and intended to return to Ukraine to organize an armed nationalist movement or flee abroad and join the Ukrainian government in exile.

To this, Abakumov remarked that, since I am an expert on Ukrainian affairs, I should trace Shumsky's connections with the nationalist underground and Ukrainian emigrants. Abakumov also said that he would send a special group to Saratov to liquidate Shumsky, and it is my task to make sure that his supporters do not guess that he was liquidated. Maironovsky, at that time the head of the toxicological laboratory of the Ministry of State Security, was urgently summoned to Saratov, where Shumsky was in the hospital. The poison from his laboratory did its job: it was officially believed that Shumsky had died of heart failure. By the way, we did not manage to establish his foreign connections. In Moscow, this operation was given unprecedented importance. The deputy minister of the MGB, Ogoltsov, to whom Maironovsky was subordinate, and Kaganovich, who personally knew Shumsky, went to Saratov.

Our assurances to Roosevelt on the eve of Yalta that Soviet citizens enjoyed freedom of religion did not at all mean the end of the confrontation with the Ukrainian Catholics, or Uniates. Grigulevich, our agent in Rome, who received Costa Rican citizenship and became Costa Rica's ambassador to the Vatican and Yugoslavia after the war, informed us that the Vatican intended to take a firm stand against Moscow because of the persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

As for the Uniate church itself, it was in a very peculiar position: being subordinate to the Vatican, the Uniates held services in Ukrainian. The church was headed by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, a Polish count and a former officer in the Austrian army. He was appointed head of the Ukrainian Uniates by the pope even before the First World War and sacrificed his military career for the sake of the church. During the First World War, he collaborated with Austrian intelligence, was arrested by the tsarist military counterintelligence and exiled, and in 1917 he was released by the Provisional Government and returned to Lvov, where a Ukrainian military nationalist organization was created, headed by Colonel Konovalts.

In 1941, when the war began and the Germans occupied Lvov, Sheptytsky sent congratulations from the Uniate Church to Hitler, hoping for the liberation of Ukraine from the Bolsheviks. He went so far as to give his blessing to the SS Galicia Division, created in November 1943, a special Ukrainian formation under the command of German Gestapo officers. The division swore allegiance to Hitler and was used for punitive actions against civilians and Jews who were exterminated in Ukraine, Slovakia and Yugoslavia. Sheptytsky appointed Archbishop Joseph Slipy as the chaplain of the division.

Separate units of this division were captured by the British in Italy and Austria, and in May 1947 the commanders of these units were sent to England. In 1951, the Intelligence Service used them as saboteurs and parachuted into Western Ukraine, where they were supposed to lead the resistance movement.

In 1944, Sheptytsky was already old and near death. Concerned about the fate of the Ukrainian Uniate Church, he, having shown wisdom, sent a mission to Moscow, which included his younger brother, Archbishop Joseph Slipyi and Archbishop Gabriel Kostelnik. Through the Presidium of the Supreme Council, they asked to receive their Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, which had never been on good terms with the Uniates. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, however, sent a delegation to the NKVD to clarify the issue of cooperation between the leaders of the Uniate Church and the Germans. General Mamulov, the head of the secretariat of the NKVD, and I were ordered to accept the Ukrainian church

delegation. To their surprise, in the Western Ukrainian dialect, I presented to them data on the cooperation of the leadership of the Uniate Church with the Germans and, as I was ordered, assured them that if they repented and it turned out that the church hierarchs themselves had not personally committed war crimes, they would be prosecuted. will not.

Subsequent events developed tragically. After the death of Metropolitan Alexander Sheptytsky, in 1945, a fierce conflict broke out among the Uniate clergy. The fact is that within the Uniate Church there has long been a strong movement for unification with the Orthodox Church. Those priests in Alexander Sheptytsky's entourage who opposed such an alliance were seriously compromised by their collaboration with the Germans. Archbishop Gavriil Kostelnik, who for nearly three decades had spoken out in favor of unification with the Orthodox Church, took the lead in this movement. We often heard that he was an agent of the NKVD, but this statement has no basis. In fact, two of his sons were involved in the Bandera movement and both died in battles with NKVD units. In 1946, Kostelnik assembled a congregation of Uniate clergy who voted for reunification with the Orthodox Church. Archbishop Gabriel Slipy was arrested and exiled. The reunification dealt a decisive blow to the Ukrainian partisan nationalist movement led by Bandera - after all, most of their commanders were from the families of Uniate priests.

In an effort to keep the nationalist movement alive, Bandera resorted to terror, which has become a daily occurrence in the life of Western Ukraine. Local authorities have essentially lost control over the countryside. Nationalist leaders forbade young people to go to recruiting stations for service in the Red Army; Bandera's people slaughtered the families of conscripts and burned their houses in an attempt to establish OUN authority over rural areas. The murder of Kostelnik on the steps of the Lviv Cathedral, when he was leaving after the service, was the culmination of a campaign of terror. The murderer was surrounded by a crowd of believers and shot himself; he was identified as a member of a terrorist group led by Bandera's deputy Shukhevych, who had led the Ukrainian underground for seven years. During the war, Shukhevych had the rank of Haupt-Sturmführer and was one of the commanders of the punitive battalion "Nachtigal". The battalion was commanded mainly by the Germans, and it consisted of Bandera. After the mass execution in July 1941 in Lvov of Jews and many representatives of the Polish intelligentsia, Bandera proclaimed the creation of a government of independent Ukraine headed by Stetsko.

However, the German authorities immediately disbanded this government. A number of OUN politicians were interned, including Bandera. Hitler considered the OUN movement only as a police force in establishing German domination on Slavic territory. The Germans supported Ukrainian nationalism only in the creation of local governments under their control and until 1944 categorically did not recognize the OUN as a political force.

Later, in 1945, part of the Nachtigal battalion joined the elite punitive division of the armed forces of Nazi Germany - the division "Galicia".

The information we received from abroad in 1947 that the Vatican was seeking the support of the American and British authorities to assist the Uniate Church and the Bandera formations closely related to it was transmitted not only to Stalin and Molotov, but also to Khrushchev, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Ukraine. Khrushchev turned to Stalin with a request to allow him to secretly liquidate the entire Uniate church elite in the former Hungarian city of Uzhgorod. In a letter sent to two addresses - Stanin and Abakumov, Khrushchev and Savchenko, the Minister of State Security of Ukraine, claimed that the archbishop of the Ukrainian Uniate Church Romzha actively cooperates with the leaders of the Bandera movement and maintains contact with the secret emissaries of the Vatican, who are actively fighting the Soviet government and providing all kinds of assistance to Bandera. They also wrote that Romzha and his group posed a serious threat to

political stability in the region that recently became part of the Soviet Union.

In addition, Khrushchev knew that Romzha had information about the situation in the leading circles of Ukraine and the planned measures to suppress the Ukrainian nationalist movement. Information came from Uniate nuns who were in close contact with the wife of Turenitsa, the first secretary of the regional party committee and the chairman of the regional executive committee. He held both positions at the same time and enjoyed great respect and love of the population. On the slogans and banners hung in Uzhgorod for the November holidays, it was written: "Long live the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution and Ivan Ivanovich Turenitsa!"

Information about the situation in the Ukrainian leadership through Romzha leaked abroad, and from there boomerang to Moscow. All this created a real danger for Khrushchev. Unable to cope with the situation, Khrushchev initiated a secret physical reprisal against Romzha.

The Minister of State Security of the USSR Abakumov showed me a letter from Khrushchev and Savchenko and warned me not to provide any assistance to the Ukrainian security agencies in this action until Stalin's direct order was received.

Stalin agreed with Khrushchev's proposal that the time had come to destroy the "terrorist nest" of the Vatican in Uzhgorod.

However, the attack on Romzha was poorly prepared: as a result of a car accident organized by Savchenko and his people, Romzha was only wounded and taken to one of the hospitals in Uzhgorod. Khrushchev panicked and again turned to Stalin for help. He claimed that Romzha was preparing for a meeting with high-ranking contacts from the Vatican.

I went to Uzhgorod with my group to find Romzha's connections and contacts, because I personally knew all the leadership of Ukrainian nationalists from the time I was infiltrated into the headquarters of the OUN.

I spent almost two weeks in Uzhgorod. At that time, Abakumov called me and said that in a week Savchenko and Mairanovsky, the head of the toxicological laboratory, would arrive in Uzhgorod with an order to liquidate Romzha. Savchenko and Mairanovsky told me that in Kyiv at the railway station, in his railway carriage, Khrushchev received them, gave clear instructions and wished them success. Two days later, Savchenko reported to Khrushchev by telephone that everything was ready for the operation, and Khrushchev ordered the action to be carried out. Mairanovsky handed over an ampoule with curare poison to an agent of local security agencies - it was a nurse in the hospital where Romzha was lying. She made the fatal injection.

As a result of this operation, Savchenko received a promotion, a year later he was transferred to Moscow and appointed Molotov's deputy in the Information Committee ...

In November 1949, the Ukrainian writer Yaroslav Galan, who furiously exposed the connections of the Ukrainian hierarchs of the Uniate Church with the Nazis and the Vatican, was hacked to death with a Hutsul hatchet in his apartment in Lvov.

After the liquidation of Romzha, for about a year, I had no contact with Abakumov, but one day at about four in the morning the phone rang.

At ten, be ready for an urgent task. Departure from Vnukovo.

I arrived at the airport with Eitingon, who accompanied me. Lieutenant General Selivanovsky, Abakumov's deputy, was already waiting here. Only when we flew up to Kyiv, he said: the ultimate goal of our journey is Lvov. However, thick fog prevented the plane from landing in Lvov, and it returned to Kyiv, from where we had already left by train for Lvov. On the way, Selivanovsky spoke about the villainous murder of Galan by Bandera. Comrade Stalin, according to him, is extremely dissatisfied with the work of the security agencies in the fight against banditry in Western Ukraine. In this regard, I was ordered to focus on the search for the leaders of the Bandera underground and their liquidation. It was said in an unquestioning tone. It became clear to me that my future depended on the fulfillment

this task.

In Lvov, we immediately got to the party activist, which was conducted by Khrushchev, who had specially arrived from Kyiv to take personal control of the search for the murderers of Galan. At the meeting, I had an argument with Khrushchev. He was clearly out of sorts: the threat of Stalin's disgrace hung over him because of the failure to put an end to rampant banditry in Western Ukraine. I pissed him off even more when I objected to the proposal to introduce special passports for residents of Western Ukraine. Khrushchev also proposed to mobilize young people to work in the Donbass and study in the factory schools of Eastern Ukraine and to deprive the Bandera formations of replenishment in such a peculiar way. I firmly stated that the introduction of special passports and the actual resettlement of young people in order to cut off all contact with nationalist parents and friends - explicit discrimination; this may further embitter the local population. As for the youth, evading forced expulsion, they will certainly go into the forests and join the ranks of armed bandit formations. Khrushchev angrily said that it was none of my business, since my task was reduced to one thing - to behead the leadership of the armed underground, and other issues would be decided by those who were supposed to.

My intervention, however, turned out to be very timely, and the idea of special passports was buried, and plans for the mobilization of young people were partially realized - only to study at the FZU. The amnesty announced soon extended to those who agreed to voluntarily hand over their weapons to the police station or to local security agencies: this step turned out to be especially effective, and already in the first week of the new, 1950, eight thousand people handed over their weapons. The vast majority of them were not really persecuted. By the way, as we managed to find out, out of these eight thousand, about five were young people from fifteen to twenty years old who fled from home to gangs after they heard about forced labor in the mines of Donbass

According to our information, the armed resistance was also coordinated by Shukhevych. From 1943 to 1950, he led the Bandera underground in Ukraine. This man possessed outstanding courage and had experience in secret work, which allowed him to engage in active subversive activities even seven years after the Germans left. While we were looking for him in the vicinity of Lvov, he was in a cardiology sanatorium on the Black Sea coast near Odessa. Then, as we know, he showed up in Lvov, where he met with several prominent cultural figures and even sent a wreath on his behalf to the funeral of one of them. His risky gesture caused talk in the city, and our agent, a former actress of the Berezhil theater in Kharkov, who wrote for Izvestia, confirmed the presence of Shukhevych in the Lvov region. We, in turn, managed to identify four of his female bodyguards, who were also his mistresses.

At that time, the armed resistance of the Soviet authorities enjoyed the support of the population living in the Lvov region. Together with Lebed, in the past a major figure in the OUN, we went to a remote village in the Lviv region. Lebed's relatives were found there - two of his nephews led a local bandit group. Previously, Lebed's cousin was shot dead by Bandera for agreeing to become the chairman of the collective farm, although they were well aware that his daughter and two sons - active participants in the anti-Soviet underground. Lebed wanted to convince them to give up armed struggle. The daughter of the shot chairman of the collective farm, despite the shock, considered the death of her father as retribution for the fact that he went to cooperate with the Soviet authorities.

I stayed in Lviv for half a year - although the denouement was inevitable, but, as often happens, it still turned out to be unexpected. Shukhevych relied too much on his old wartime connections and let his guard down. Meanwhile, we contacted the family of Gorbovoy, a lawyer and an influential member of the Bandera movement. As it turned out, Gorbovoy and his family wanted to compromise with the Soviet authorities and did not want to personally participate in the killings. I managed to find an approach to Gorbovoy and his friends and proposed on behalf of

Soviet leadership: the war must be ended as soon as possible and people returned to normal life. I promised to get Gorbovoy's niece released from a camp in Russia, where she was sent only because she was his relative. I kept my promise - after my personal call to Abakumov, Gorbovoy's niece was immediately released and taken by plane to Lvov.

In response, Gorbovoy pointed out to us the places where Shukhevych could be hiding. By that time, we had also managed to win over to our side our contact Shukhevych, a player of the local Dynamo football team. Gorbovoy and his like-minded academician Krylyakevich, whose son actively participated in the Bandera movement, repented and publicly declared the fallacy of their political views; they were not repressed.

Shukhevych, meanwhile, made another fatal mistake. When a policeman showed up at the house where he lived with one of his bodyguards, Daria Gussyak, for a routine check of documents, his nerves gave out. Shukhevych shot the policeman, and all three - himself, Daria and her mother - fled. Our search led to a remote village, where we found only Daria's mother. Shukhevych was not there, but the presence of this woman indicated that he could not have gone far. Later, when Daria was arrested, she testified that she begged Shukhevych not to kill her mother: she had a wooden prosthesis, and he was afraid that it would be difficult to escape with her. Then they left her in the village.

Our group to capture Shukhevych settled down in the house where Darya's mother lived. Pretty soon, a pretty young medical student from Lvov, Daria's niece, showed up there. She came to see her relatives and speak, as she said, on behalf of the institute committee of the Komsomol, with talks about the dangers of nationalism. During our friendly conversation (I introduced myself as the new deputy chairman of the district executive committee), answering my cautious question where her aunt is now, the girl replied that she lives in the dormitory of her institute and from time to time visits the Forest Academy, where she plans to enter soon.

The Surveillance Group quickly established which "academy" Darya went to: she made regular trips to a village near Lvov, where she stayed for hours in a cooperative shop. This led us to assume that Shukhevych was there at that time. Unfortunately, the young officers conducting surveillance in March 1950 were inexperienced and tried to woo her as a cover. When Lieutenant Revenko extended his hand to Darya and said in Ukrainian that he would like to get to know such a charming woman better, she sensed a trap and, without thinking twice, shot him point-blank. She was immediately seized, but not by my people, but by local residents who witnessed the murder committed before their eyes.

My people managed to recapture her from the crowd and take her to the local branch of the MGB. Half an hour later, the leader of the group, my closest assistant, was already there, he immediately ordered a rumor to be spread in the market that the woman had killed the lieutenant and shot herself on the basis of love. Daria was securely isolated, and I, General Drozdov and twenty operatives surrounded the general store in order to block Shukhevych's possible escape routes. Drozdov demanded that Shukhevych lay down his arms, in which case he was guaranteed his life.

In response, an automatic burst sounded. Shukhevych, trying to break through the encirclement, threw two hand grenades from hiding. A shootout ensued, as a result of which Shukhevych was killed.

After Shukhevych's death, the resistance movement in western Ukraine waned and soon died down. We managed to find out that Shukhevych created a very dangerous agent network. Half a year before the events described, in June 1949, Daria, as it turned out, lived in Moscow for two weeks at the Metropol Hotel on a passport in a false name. She had explosive devices in her room. During these two weeks, she repeatedly visited Red Square in search of a suitable "target". It was assumed that this explosion would impress the West and the OUN would receive financial support.

Archival materials of the Bandera movement were secretly taken out by nationalists

from Lvov to Leningrad and hidden in the department of rare manuscripts of the Public Library named after M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin.

The collapse of the Ukrainian "epopee" came a year later. The Chekist authorities and personally Khamazyuk, an operative from my group, managed to send an agent to the Bandera detachment that still survived, which by that time had moved from Ukraine to Czechoslovakia, and from there to Germany. British intelligence, having reached out to these people, transported them to England for training in subversive activities. Our man was introduced to Bandera as one of the activists close to Shukhevych. While in Munich, he kept in touch with us, but as soon as the group moved to England, we decided not to risk contacting him for the time being. OUN leaders abroad were very worried because of the lack of radio communication with Shukhevych. They, supported by the British, decided to send the head of the OUN security service, Matviyko, to Ukraine. He was instructed to find out about the fate of the silent Shukhevych and to activate the underground movement. We instructed our agent to send an encrypted postcard to Germany to the specified address with a message about the route of the Matviyko group. It was assumed that Bandera's emissaries would land in the area of the city of Rovno. Our air defense service was instructed not to shoot down the British plane, which was supposed to take Matvienko's group, fly from Malta, and then drop everyone by parachute near Rovno. This was done not only to protect our agent, who was part of a group of saboteurs, but also because we intended to capture everyone alive.

The members of the group were warmly welcomed at the safe house by the people of Raikhman, the deputy head of counterintelligence, who skillfully played the role of underground workers whom Matviyko hoped to find there. After drinking - sleeping pills were mixed into alcohol -

The "guests" fell asleep peacefully and woke up already in the inner prison of the regional department of the MGB.

All this happened in May 1951. At three o'clock in the morning the phone rang in my apartment. Abakumov's secretary called: I had to urgently appear in the minister's office. Abakumov was interrogated by Matviyko, which was conducted by the minister himself and his deputy Pitovranov. At first, I acted as an interpreter, since Matviyko spoke only in the Western Ukrainian dialect. The interrogation will last two hours. Then Abakumov ordered me to take care of Matviyko myself. I worked with him for about a month. These were not interrogations, but a conversation, that is, no protocols were kept. Our conversations took place in the office of the head of the inner prison, Mironov, where Matviyko even had the opportunity to watch TV. I remember how he was struck by the opera "Bogdan Khmelnytsky" in Ukrainian. This? the performance was part of the decade of Ukrainian art in Moscow. Neither in Poland, nor in Western Ukraine, Matviyko has ever been to opera performances performed in his native language. It seemed unbelievable to him, and in order to finally convince him of the authenticity of what he saw, I took Matviyko with me to the theater for the Ukrainian decade, although accompanied by an "escort".

After talking with me, he was convinced that, apart from, perhaps, the names of a few secondary agents, we, in fact, knew everything about the Ukrainian emigre organization and the Bandera movement. He was shocked when I began to present the biographies of all the leaders of the Ukrainian nationalists known to him, to give details of their personal lives, to talk about their mutual strife. After assuring Matviyko that I was not going to recruit him, I explained: the most important thing for us is to stop the armed struggle in Western Ukraine. With the permission of Abakumov, I called Melnikov, the first secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, who replaced Khrushchev in this post, and asked him to receive Matviyko in Kiev and show him that Ukraine, and Western Ukraine in particular, is not a territory occupied by Russians, but free lands where people live free people.

I never met Matviyko again. In Kyiv, he was placed in a safe house under house arrest, while being given the opportunity to move freely around the city. Then he was transferred to Lviv, where he lived in a mansion. From there he escaped. Which one is here

a commotion arose in Kyiv and Moscow! An all-Union search was announced. The Minister of State Security of Ukraine immediately ordered the arrest of everyone who was responsible for protecting Matvieyko. It turned out that he left quite simply: he left the gates of the mansion, said goodbye to the guard, who over the past ten days had gotten used to the fact that Matvieyko freely came and went (albeit accompanied by state security officers), and did not stop him, although there was no escort on this time it wasn't.

These days he lived in the apartment of his old acquaintance, not connected with Bandera. Matvieyko told him that he had come from Moscow on business and would not stay long with him. During this time, he bypassed the Bandera appearances and checked the Lvov connections, about which he did not give any evidence in Moscow. To his horror, he discovered that their spy network did not exist: two addresses turned out to be incorrect, and people associated with the underground were fictitious. All this was the fantasy of the reporters about the exaggerated successes of the Bandera movement that rained down on the OUN headquarters in London and Munich. Matvieyko was an experienced intelligence officer enough to understand that the remaining turnouts were probably under the supervision of Soviet counterintelligence, they were kept only to be used as traps for unlucky visitors from abroad.

Three days later, Matvieyko surrendered himself to the security forces in Lvov. At a press conference hosted by the Ukrainian leadership, he condemned the Bandera movement. Using his authority, Matvieyko called on the emigration and the OUN, who fought in bandit detachments, to reconcile. Subsequently, he began a new life - he worked as an accountant, married, raised three children and died peacefully in 1974.

The story with Matviyiko acquires a new meaning in the light of the proclamation of Ukrainian independence. In the West, they never realized that after the revolution of 1917, Ukraine for the first time in its history gained statehood as part of the Soviet Union. A real flourishing came in national art, literature, the education system in the native language, which was completely impossible to imagine under tsarism, nor under Austrian and Polish rule in Galicia.

Ukrainian party leaders, unlike their counterparts from other Soviet republics, were always met with special honor in Moscow, and they had a significant influence on the formation of the domestic and foreign policy of the Kremlin leadership. Ukraine was a permanent reserve for the promotion of personnel for leadership work in Moscow. The Ukrainian Communist Party had its own Politburo, which was not in any of the republics, and was a member of the United Nations. Yes, before 1992 Ukraine was not a fully independent state, but I still consider myself a Ukrainian - one of those who in some way contributed to the creation of the position that it acquired within the Soviet Union. The weight that Ukraine had, the strengthening of its prestige in the USSR and abroad became a prelude to its acquisition of a completely new status of an independent state after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In 1946 or 1947, armed detachments of Kurds under the command of Mullah Mustafa Barzani entered into battle with the Shah's troops, crossed our border with Iran and ended up on the territory of Azerbaijan.

The Kurds living in Iraq, Iran and Turkey experienced all sorts of oppression, and representatives of the British authorities, who flirted with the Kurds during the period of revival of pro-German sentiments in the leading circles of Tehran in 1939-1941, after the entry of British and Soviet troops into Iran refused to support them. .

The combat detachments of Barzani that broke through the border numbered up to two thousand fighters, with them there were the same number of members of their families. The Soviet authorities first interned the Kurds and placed them in a camp, and in 1947 Abakumov ordered me to negotiate with Barzani and offer him and the people who arrived with him political asylum, followed by temporary resettlement in rural areas of Uzbekistan near Tashkent

Barzani I was introduced as Matveev, deputy general director of TASS and a spokesman for the Soviet government. For the first time in my life I met a real nobleman - a feudal lord. At the same time, Barzani impressed me as a very shrewd politician and experienced military leader. He said that over the past hundred years, the Kurds had raised eighty rebellions against the Persians, Iraqis, Turks and the British, and in more than sixty cases turned to Russia for help and, as a rule, received it. Therefore, according to him, it is quite natural for them to turn to us for help at a difficult time for them, when the Iranian authorities liquidated the Kurdish Republic.

Shortly before these events, the leaders of the Iranian Kurdish rebels fell into a trap arranged by the Shah: they were invited to Tehran for negotiations, captured there and hanged. Only Barzani escaped this fate. When the Shah invited Barzani himself to the talks, he replied that he would come only if the Shah sent members of his family as hostages to his headquarters. While preliminary negotiations with the Shah were taking place, Barzani moved most of his forces to the northern regions of Iran, closer to the Soviet border. We, for our part, were interested in using the Kurds in our line of weakening British and American influence in the countries of the Middle East bordering the Soviet Union. I announced to Barzani that the Soviet side had agreed that Barzani and some of his officers would receive special training at our military schools and academies. I also assured him that the resettlement in Central Asia would be temporary until conditions were ripe for their return to Kurdistan.

Abakumov forbade me to inform the leader of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Bagirov, about the content of the negotiations with Barzani, and especially about Stalin's agreement to allow Kurdish officers to be trained in our military schools.

The fact is that Baghirov sought to use Barzani and his people to destabilize the situation in Iranian Azerbaijan. However, Moscow believed that Barzani could play a more important role in overthrowing the pro-British regime in Iraq. And besides, what is especially important, with the help of the Kurds, we could disable the oil fields in Iraq (Mosul) for a long time, which at that time were of exceptional importance in supplying oil products to the entire Anglo-American military group in the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

After negotiations with Barzani, I flew to Tashkent and informed the Uzbek leadership about his upcoming arrival. Then he returned to Moscow.

Barzani, along with his disarmed detachments and members of their families, was sent to Uzbekistan. Five years later, in March 1952, I was sent to Uzbekistan to meet with Barzani near Tashkent to resolve the problems that had arisen. Barzani was not satisfied with the position of passive waiting and the attitude of the local authorities. He turned to Stalin for help and demanded the fulfillment of the promises made to him earlier. He insisted on the formation of Kurdish combat units. Barzani also retained his influence and control over his fellow tribesmen settled on collective farms around Tashkent.

The meeting with Barzani took place at a government dacha. My interpreter was Major Zemskov, who, like Barzani, spoke English fluently. Barzani told me how the Americans and the British wanted to bribe him to put pressure on the Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish governments.

The plan I developed on behalf of the new Minister of State Security, Ignatiev, was to form a special brigade from the Kurds - one and a half thousand people - for sabotage operations in the Middle East. It could also be used for the planned overthrow of the government of Nuri Said in Baghdad, which would seriously undermine the influence of the British in the entire Middle East region. (With the help of the Kurds, this was accomplished in 1958, when I was already in prison.) The Kurds also had a role to play in our plans to disable the oil pipelines on

the territories of Iraq, Iran and Syria in the event of an outbreak of hostilities or a direct threat of a nuclear attack on the USSR.

Barzani agreed to sign a cooperation agreement with the Soviet government in exchange for our guarantees of assistance in the creation of the Kurdish Republic, which Barzani saw primarily in the area densely populated by Kurds at the junction of the borders of northern Iraq, Iran and Turkey.

After listening to Barzani, I replied that I did not have the authority to discuss an agreement of this kind. However, we did not object to the establishment of a Kurdish government in exile. The responsible official of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Manchukho Party who accompanied me, who participated in the negotiations, proposed the creation of a Democratic Party of Kurdistan headed by Barzani. According to the Manchi, the party was to coordinate the activities of representatives of the Barzani government in all areas of the Kurdish population. The headquarters of the party could, according to him, be located in the board of the collective farm, located fifteen kilometers from Tashkent.

I did not intervene in this conversation, but listened attentively. When the conversation ended, Barzani invited me to a meeting with the officers of his headquarters. At our appearance, about thirty people who were in the room stretched out at attention. Then, as if on cue, they all fell to their knees and crawled towards Barzani, begging to be allowed to kiss the hem of his robe and boots. Naturally, all the illusions about a democratic Kurdistan that I had until then vanished immediately. It becomes quite clear to me that this is yet another ideological initiative that arose in the depths of the Central Committee on Staraya Square.

In April 1952, Barzani, surrounded by members of his family and fellow tribesmen, settled in a large collective farm near Tashkent. In Moscow, it was decided that the Kurds would be given the status of an autonomous region. The Ministry of State Security was instructed to organize military training for the Kurds and assist in establishing links with foreign compatriots. Our attempts to introduce our own people into Barzani's entourage and recruit any of the Kurds were successfully blocked by their security service. True, Zemskov, who had considerable experience in dealing with the Kurds, manages to recruit one junior officer who studied at our military academy, but after returning to Tashkent, he soon disappeared without a trace. We could not find him and came to the conclusion that he was liquidated on the orders of Barzani.

Thanks to the Kurdish issue, I first got acquainted with the bureaucratic procedures in the preparation of documents for the Politburo. Ignatiev ordered me to remain in the Manchu office until the document was agreed with our proposals on the Kurdish problem. Ignatiev was always polite and correct, but when I said that I had an appointment with Barzani at my Moscow hotel, he sharply scolded me for not understanding the political importance of the issue and ordered me to cancel the meeting: first of all, we need to get the decision of the Politburo on Kurdish issue. Together with Manchukho and I, Ignatiev visited Molotov and Vyshinsky to obtain their visas for the draft decision. By the way, at that time for the first time Molotov and Vyshinsky seemed to me aged, weak-willed and extremely tired. However, they were persistent enough to delete from the draft document the same paragraph, which contained an instruction to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hold negotiations and consultations on the Kurdish problem. They also insisted that this issue should be considered by the Politburo on the proposal of the Ministry of State Security, and not as a joint proposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ours. When we left, accompanied by a security officer who had a draft document in his briefcase, I suggested that Manche go to Lubyanka and print the final text of the document there, taking into account the comments of Molotov and Vyshinsky. Ignatiev agreed.

And then something completely incomprehensible began for me. We submitted the final text of the decision to Ignatiev, and he approved it. But for the minister, the cover letter was no less important - an explanatory note to the text of the decision, which was sent out

members of the Politburo. Ignatiev forced three times to change the order in the list of Politburo members who were supposed to receive our document. He even asked Manchu whether the distribution should be in alphabetical order or list the members of the Politburo Foreign Policy Commission first. In this case, Khrushchev should have been on the list before Bulganin. And what about Beria? Should he be ahead of Malenkov? These nuances, about which I had no idea, just dumbfounded me. But Manchukha turned out to be a real expert in writing cover letters and gave appropriate advice to Ignatiev. The typists wondered why they should reprint the document, in which everything remained the same, except for the order in which the members of the Central Committee and the government were listed.

In the spring of 1953, a curious incident happened to me that violated the rules of conspiracy. Barzani attended lectures at the military academy where I studied. One day he saw me there in the uniform of a lieutenant general. With a sly wink at me, he said through his interpreter, a young lieutenant:

- I am glad to deal with a representative of the Soviet government in such a high
military rank.

For my part, in response, I wished him success in mastering military disciplines.

The last time I accidentally met Barzani on the eve of my arrest was on Gorky Street. I was in civilian clothes. He noticed me and apparently wanted to approach, but this meeting was of no use to me in my position, and I preferred to pretend that I did not see him, and quickly got lost in the crowd.

Barzani was smart enough to understand that the future of the Kurds depends on how they manage to play on the contradictions between superpowers that have their own interests in the Middle East. Casting a retrospective glance, you see that the superpowers did not at all strive for a just solution to the Kurdish problem. The fate of Kurdistan from the point of view of its interests has never been considered in the Kremlin, as, indeed, in London and Washington. Both the West and we were interested in one thing - access to oil fields in the countries of the Middle East, no matter how cynical it looks. Suslov, who was later assigned to deal with the Kurdish issue, promised Barzani all-round support in the struggle for autonomy only in order to overthrow Nuri Said in Iraq with the help of the Kurds. The Americans, for their part, also promised Barzani support in order to overthrow the pro-British leadership in Iraq with his help and replace him with their proteges, but at a critical moment they took a wait-and-see attitude, agreeing with the British. In a word, they played with the fate of the Kurds as best they could.

In the 1940s and 1950s, our goal was to use the Kurdish movement in confrontation with the West in the context of the Cold War. The idea of creating a Kurdish Republic allowed us to pursue a policy aimed at weakening the British and American positions in the Middle East, but the general Kurdish population was indifferent to actions directed against the British and Americans in this region.

Until the second half of the 50s, the Kurds were our only allies in the Middle East. When the regime of Nuri Said was overthrown in a military coup (with our support), we acquired such allies as Iraq, Syria, Egypt, which, from the point of view of the geopolitical interests of the Soviet Union, were much more important than the Kurds. Iraq and Syria have come to play a major role in our Middle East policy and confrontation with the West in this turbulent region.

The tragedy of Barzani himself and his people was that in the interests of the USSR and the West (to a certain extent also the Arab states and Iran), the Kurds were considered as a kind of intimidating force in the region or a bargaining chip in the conflict clashes of Turkish, Iranian and Iraqi rulers.

A reasonable solution to the Kurdish problem would be to provide international guarantees of autonomy, however limited it may be. Essentially, no one in the West or in the countries of the Arab East wanted the oil

Mosul deposits ended up on the territory of an independent Kurdish state and under its control.

In 1963, when we had complications with the Qasem government and the Iraqi nationalists who replaced it, while in prison, I sent my proposals from there for possible contacts with Barzani and was notified that my proposals were accepted. Help was sent to the Kurds - weapons and ammunition - to protect their lands from the punitive expeditions of the Iraqi army. However, our attempts to make the Kurds our strategic allies in order to be able to influence events in Iraq have not been successful.

RAUL WALLENBERG. "LABORATORY-X"

The mystery surrounding the name of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat widely known around the world for his work in saving Jews during World War II and who disappeared in 1945, has not yet been solved.

Wallenberg was detained by SMERSH military counterintelligence in 1945 in Budapest and secretly liquidated, as I assume, in the internal prison of the MGB in 1947.

Nearly half a century has passed in fruitless investigations carried out by both official persons from the KGB and journalists, but the Wallenberg case was never discovered.

Recently, a letter was found from the head of the intelligence department of the NKGB of the USSR, Fitin, to SMERSH, which arrested Wallenberg in 1945, demanding that he be transferred to intelligence for operational purposes. However, Abakumov rejected this idea, apparently trying to ascribe the "laurels" of successful work with Wallenberg to his apparatus.

Raoul Wallenberg belonged to a well-known family of financial magnates who, from the beginning of 1944, maintained secret contacts with representatives of the Soviet government. Although I was not assigned to develop Wallenberg and his connections with the German and American intelligence agencies, I was aware of the contribution that his family had made in concluding a separate peace with Finland. The nature of the military counterintelligence reports about Raoul Wallenberg and the contacts of the whole family suggested that the diplomat was a suitable target for recruitment or the role of a hostage. Wallenberg's arrest, interrogations, the circumstances of his death all confirm that there was an attempt to recruit him, but he refused to cooperate with us. Perhaps the fear that a failed recruitment attempt would become known if released Wallenberg, forced him to be liquidated.

During the war years, our residency in Stockholm was instructed to find influential people in Swedish society who could become mediators in negotiations with the Finns on the conclusion of a separate peace. That's when we established contacts with the Wallenberg family.

Stalin was concerned that Finland, an ally of Germany since 1941, might sign a peace treaty with the Americans without taking into account our interests in the Baltics. The Americans, in turn, feared that we would occupy Finland. However, we did not have such a need: the neutrality of the nearest neighboring country was important to us in order to use it to our advantage through agents of influence in the main political parties in Finland. These people agreed to cooperate with us if we ensured the neutrality of the Finnish state. In addition, they wanted to play the role of an intermediary between East and West.

It is significant that in the 1970s and 1980s, influential political circles in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and also in the Baltic republics, who advocated the revival of their state independence, sought to follow the Finnish example. These attempts by both sides - having made up to hindered them - called Finlandization.

I remember how in 1938, a year before the outbreak of the Soviet-Finnish war, Stalin ordered the transfer of two hundred thousand dollars for the political support of the Finnish party of small

owners, so that it plays a certain role in shaping the government's position on the settlement of border issues. The money was given to the Finns by Colonel Rybkin, my friend, who was then the first secretary of the Soviet embassy in Finland and known there by the name Yartsev. Stalin personally instructed him how to talk to political figures who received money from us, as well as on the preparation of secret negotiations with representatives of the Finnish government with a view to concluding a non-aggression and cooperation pact, planned with the participation of a confidant of the Soviet government, personally known to Mannerheim. It was Count Ignatiev, author of the book *Fifty Years in the Line*. Mannerheim rejected the proposals transmitted by Yartsev to the Finnish government, but informed Hitler about the unusual proposal of the Soviet side. Thus, the German leadership, when deciding to start negotiations with us on the conclusion of a non-aggression pact, knew very well that their proposal could not be considered by Moscow as completely unexpected and unacceptable.

During the war years, Rybkin and his wife led our residency in Stockholm. One of their tasks was to maintain contact with the Red Chapel network in Germany through Swedish channels. Rybkin's wife is known to many as a children's writer on the books "Mother's Heart", "Through the Icy Mist", "Bonfires", etc. - she was published under her maiden name Voskresenskaya. In the diplomatic circles of Stockholm and Moscow, this Russian beauty was known as Zoya Yartseva, who shone not only with beauty, but also with an excellent knowledge of German and Finnish. Rybkin, a tall, well-built, charming man, had a subtle sense of humor and was an excellent storyteller. The couple were very popular among diplomats in the Swedish capital, which allowed them to keep abreast of German probing attempts to find out the possibility of a separate peace agreement with the United States of America and Great Britain without the participation of the Soviet Union. By the way, for provocative purposes, German intelligence spread rumors in Stockholm in 1943-1944 about possible secret negotiations between the USSR and Germany on a separate peace without the participation of the Americans and the British.

The Rybkins took an active part in the preparation and execution of secret economic agreements. In 1942, with the help of our agent, the famous Swedish actor and satirist Karl Gerhard, they managed to conclude a barter deal: we received high-quality Swedish steel, essential for aircraft construction, in exchange for platinum. Sweden's neutrality was grossly violated, but the bank that made the deal made a handsome profit. A controlling stake in the bank *al adel* was the Wallenberg family.

Karl Gerhard maintained friendly relations with Raoul's uncle Markus Wallenberg and, according to the plan approved in Moscow, introduced Zoya Rybkina to him at the reception.

Zoya is fascinated by Markus Watlenberg. They met again on a weekend at a luxurious hotel owned by the Wallenberg family near Stockholm. The conversation was about how to arrange a meeting of diplomats of two countries - the USSR and Finland, - at war, where they could discuss the conclusion of a separate peace treaty. Zoya Rybkina told Wallenberg that it was necessary to bring to the attention of the Finns: the Soviet side guarantees full state independence at the end of the war, but in view of the continuation of hostilities in the Baltic theater, it expects to receive the right to a limited military presence in the ports of Finland and a limited deployment of naval and air forces. bases on its territory.

The Wallenberg family, in turn, had financial interests in Finland and was very interested in a peaceful settlement of Soviet-Finnish relations.

It took Markus Wallenberg just a week to arrange a meeting between Zoya and the representative of the Finnish government, Juho Kusti Paasikivi, who later became president, replacing Carl Gustav Mannerheim in this post. The Soviet side at the talks was represented by Alexandra Kollontai, our ambassador to Sweden, who for a long time remained the first and only woman in the rank of ambassador. Only in the 70s in the rank of ambassador again

turned out to be a woman - Zoya Mironova, who headed the Soviet mission to international organizations accredited in Geneva.

Consultations continued throughout the summer, and finally, on September 4, 1944, peace treaty between the USSR and Finland.

After Raoul Wallenberg fell into our hands as a hostage or possible recruitment target, Stalin and Molotov probably expected to use the position of the Wallenberg family to obtain lucrative loans in the West.

In 1945, the Soviet leadership spread rumors that a Jewish autonomous republic would be created in the Crimea, where Jews from all over the world, especially from Europe, who had suffered from fascism, could come. Stalin bluffed, pursuing several goals. First, with this bait - the Jewish Republic - he hoped to appease the British allies, who feared that a Jewish state would be established in Palestine, which was under their protectorate. Secondly, Stalin sought to find out the possibilities of attracting Western capital to restore the national economy destroyed by the war.

From Beria, I was instructed to probe the Americans on this issue during conversations with their ambassador in Moscow Harriman (in 1945 I met with him under the name Matveev).

By the time of his arrest by military counterintelligence, Raoul Wallenberg was known for his activities in rescuing and transporting Jews from Germany and Hungary to Palestine. We knew about the high reputation of Wallenberg among the leaders of the international Zionist organizations. Arresting him, like any Western diplomat, without a direct order from Moscow was unthinkable. Even if we assume that he was detained by accident (at the same time, more than thirty diplomats of some European countries were detained, almost all of them were released a few months later in exchange for prisoners of war and servicemen of the Soviet Army who remained in the West), then the heads of military counterintelligence in Budapest should have been sure to report this to Moscow. It is now known that the order to arrest Wallenberg was signed by Bulganin, Stalin's deputy for the People's Commissariat of Defense, and the order was immediately carried out.

My former colleague, Lieutenant General Belkin, at one time deputy head of SMERSH, was familiar with the Wallenberg case. He told me that in 1945, the SMERSH front-line agencies received an orientation on Wallenberg, which indicated that he was suspected of collaborating with German, American and British intelligence, and ordered to establish constant surveillance over him, track and study his contacts, primarily with German intelligence agencies.

Wallenberg's work, as I recall, was reported by our agent Kutuzov (he belongs to the family of the great commander), an émigré who was recruited to cooperate with Soviet intelligence back in the early 1930s. Kutuzov worked for the Red Cross mission in Budapest and participated in the development of Wallenberg. According to Kutuzov, Raul Watlenberg actively cooperated with German intelligence. Kutuzov interpreted his behavior as a double or even triple game. Of course, in such a risky business - the salvation of the Jews - it was necessary to maintain close contacts with officials and the German secret services. I remember that Belkin told me about several recorded meetings between Wallenberg and German intelligence chief Schellenberg.

Circumstances developed in such a way that Wallenberg was in the sphere of increased attention of our intelligence agencies. Perhaps through him the Soviet leadership expects to achieve closer cooperation between the Wallenberg family and our representatives in the Scandinavian countries in order to gain the confidence of international capital to obtain loans. It is possible that the plan to recruit or use him as a hostage in a possible political game arose because Wallenberg was seen as an important witness to the behind-the-scenes ties between the business circles of America and Nazi Germany, as well as the secret services of these countries during the war years. When the allies reached a secret agreement on

In the circle of accusations that will be brought against the leaders of the Third Reich at the Nuremberg trials, the need for Wallenberg disappeared - he was destroyed.

Raoul Wallenberg was detained (in fact, it was an arrest) in his apartment: counterintelligence officers came to him and offered to go to the headquarters of a group of Soviet troops. Wallenberg then said to one of his friends: I don't know who I will be - a guest or prisoner.

He was taken to Moscow under guard, but in the sleeping car they were treated as a "guest", food was brought from the restaurant car. Kutuzov was also taken to Moscow, separately from Wallenberg. Soon Kutuzov, unlike Wallenberg, was released from prison and allowed to travel to the West, of course, on the condition that he sold active cooperation with Soviet intelligence. He eventually settled in Ireland, where he died in 1967.

In Moscow, Wallenberg was placed in a special block of the internal prison on Lubyanka, where especially important persons were detained, who were persuaded to cooperate; if they refused, they were eliminated.

Interrogation protocols were regularly sent to the German department of our intelligence Wallenberg. Perhaps the investigators intimidated him, accusing him of having links with the Gestapo.

From the materials published in the press, it is clear that Wallenberg was kept in Moscow in two prisons - in the inner one at Lubyanka and in Lefortovo. Employees of the MGB-KGB recall that after interrogations "with passion" in Lefortovo, Wallenberg was again transferred to a special block of the inner prison in Lubyanka.

The special block of the inner prison was more like a hotel. The rooms in which the prisoners were kept could only be called cells conditionally: high ceilings, normal furniture. Food was brought from the canteen and restaurant of the NKVD, in quality it, of course, was very different from the prison. However, this place under Stalin was sinister. This building housed the commandant's office of the NKVD-MGB, where in 1937-1950 sentences were carried out against persons sentenced to death, as well as those whom the government considered necessary to liquidate in a special, that is, non-judicial, order.

In Varsonofevsky Lane, behind the Lubyanka prison, there was a toxicological laboratory directly subordinate to the minister and the commandant's office and a special cell attached to it. The toxicological laboratory was called "Laboratory-X" in official documents. The head of the laboratory, Colonel of the Medical Service, Professor Mairanovsky was engaged in research on the effect of deadly gases and poisons on malignant tumors. Professors were highly regarded in medical circles.

In 1937, Mairanovsky's research group from the Institute of Biochemistry, headed by Academician Bach, was transferred to the NKVD and reported directly to the head of the special department of operational equipment at the commandant's office of NKVD-MGB. The commandant's office was responsible for guarding the NKVD building, maintaining secrecy and security, and for carrying out death sentences.

All the work of the laboratory, the involvement of its employees in the operations of special services, as well as access to the laboratory, which was strictly limited even for the leadership of the NKVD-MGB, were regulated by the Regulations approved by the government and orders for NKVD-MGB. Neither I nor my deputy Eitingon had access to "Laboratory-X" and the special cell.

The work of the laboratory was directly supervised by the Minister of State Security or his first deputy. There are still a lot of monstrous rumors about this laboratory.

An audit carried out under Stalin, after the arrest of Mairanovsky, and then under Khrushchev in 1960, for the purpose of anti-Stalinist revelations, showed that Mairanovsky and members of his group were involved in the execution of death sentences and the liquidation of objectionable persons by direct decision of the government in 1937—1947 and 1950, using poisons for this. I know that such actions were carried out by our intelligence abroad also in the 1960s and 1970s. Major General spoke and wrote about this

KGB Oleg Kalugin.

Wallenberg was interrogated by intelligence officers, most often by Lieutenant Colonel Kopel Jansky, who spoke fluent German. He was fired from the authorities in 1951 because of his Jewish origin. Although Kopelyansky's participation in the interrogations was documented - his name appears in the prison register of the summons of the prisoner for interrogation to the investigator - he denied this and said that he did not remember the person under investigation with that name. However, these entries in the journal show that it was Kopelyansky who called Wallenberg out of the cell for interrogation the day before his death.

The Wallenberg case reached a dead end by early July 1947. He refused to cooperate with Soviet intelligence and was no longer needed either as a witness to secret political games or as a hostage - the Nuremberg trials were over.

It seems that Wallenberg was transferred to the special cell of "Laboratory-X", where he was given a lethal injection under the guise of treatment (at the same time, the country's leadership continued to assure the Swedes that they knew nothing about the whereabouts and fate of Wallenberg). The prison medical service had no idea about this, and his death was ascertained in the usual manner. However, Minister of State Security Abakumov, apparently aware of the real cause of Wallenberg's death, forbade the autopsy of the body and ordered him to be cremated.

his.

There was a special practice of cremation of those who were destroyed by a special government decision: no autopsy was performed, the ashes were to be buried as unclaimed in a common grave. Later, the authorities were very reluctant to admit that the ashes of such famous people as Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Meyerhold and others were buried in this common grave. The crematorium of the Donskoy Monastery was then the only one, therefore, perhaps, the ashes of my boss, friend and mentor Shpigelglas and one of the leaders of Serebryansky's intelligence service lie in the same grave. It is very likely that the ashes of Wallenberg and Beria are buried there.

As follows from the memoirs of former employees of the MGB-KGB, a journal of special records of all liquidations with links to the relevant decisions of higher authorities in a sealed envelope with the inscription "do not open without the permission of the minister" and the stamp "top secret" after the arrest of Beria was sent to Sukhanov, Malenkov's assistant, head of the special sector of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU. In 1966, Colonel Studnikov, who immediately after my arrest replaced me as head of reconnaissance and sabotage work abroad, his deputy Gudimovich and Colonel Vasilevsky confirmed to the Central Committee that this package had been removed from the safe at Lubyanka and transferred to a special sector of the Presidium of the Central Committee. Since then, it has been in the bowels of the archives or destroyed at the direction of the top leadership, as it contains evidence of direct responsibility for the actions carried out by "Laboratory-X", not only Yezhov, Beria, Abakumov, Merkulov, but also the country's top leadership - Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov, Bulganin, Khrushchev.

In June 1993, Izvestia published Maksimova's article "Wallenberg is dead. Unfortunately, there is enough evidence", and the newspaper "Segodnya" Abarinov's article "Laundering not only money, but also versions". Both articles contain excerpts from documents relating to the fate of Wallenberg.

From Vyshinsky's memo to Molotov (1947) it is clear that at the end of 1944 the Swedes turned to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR "with a request to take under the protection of the first secretary of the Swedish mission in Budapest, Raoul Wallenberg."

In 1945, at the beginning of January, the Swedes were informed that Wallenberg had been discovered and taken under the protection of Soviet military units (in fact, Wallenberg was arrested by military counterintelligence in Budapest).

After some time, the Swedes notified the Foreign Ministry that Wallenberg was not among the members of their mission who had left Budapest, and asked to be found. On this issue, they sent eight notes to the Soviet authorities and made five oral inquiries. In 1946, the Swedish ambassador to Moscow, Söderblom, turned to Stalin (he was received by him) with a personal

request - to find out the fate of Wallenberg.

In turn, the Foreign Ministry also asked SMERSH and the Ministry of State Security several times about Wallenberg. Finally, in February 1947, the Foreign Ministry was informed that Wallenberg was at the disposal of the MGB.

In the memorandum mentioned above, Vyshinsky wrote: "Since the Wallenberg case will continue to remain without progress to this day, I ask you to oblige Comrade. Abakumov to submit a statement on the merits of the case and proposals for its liquidation."

For me there is no doubt about the ominous meaning of Vyshinsky's last words. He does not propose to close the case (then there would be a different wording - "stop the case"), but almost "demands" that Abakumov submit proposals for the destruction of Wallenberg as an undesirable person for the Soviet leadership.

So, Vyshinsky made such a request - this is extremely important - being Molotov's deputy and for intelligence work, which was carried out in those years by the Committee of Information. Fedotov, who informed Vyshinsky that Wallenberg was in prison, was also one of the leaders of the Information Committee at that time.

Molotov's resolution on Vyshinsky's note is also of great importance: "Comrade. Abakumov. Please report to me. May 18, 47

In fact, the order was the order of the deputy head of government and the head of intelligence to submit proposals on how to eliminate Wallenberg. This was the usual practice of those years. (Recently published and televised is a document sent to Stalin and Molotov in 1947 concerning an American citizen, NKVD agent Isaac Oggins, who was suspected of a double game. This document contains the same wording.)

After the proposal was considered, Stalin or Molotov gave their consent orally, and sometimes in writing. If verbally, then Abakumov, as it was established during the checks and the investigation of his case, made a note on such documents: "Consent of Comrades. Stalin, Molotov learned" and put down the date.

It is clear from official documents that Wallenberg died on July 17, 1947. However, on August 18 of the same year, Vyshinsky informed the Swedish ambassador that the Soviet government had no information about Wallenberg and that he could not be detained by the Soviet authorities, but most likely became an accidental victim of street fighting in Budapest (in January 1945, we informed the Swedes, that Wallenberg is under the protection of Soviet military units).

In March-May 1956, during the Soviet-Swedish negotiations held in Moscow, the Swedish side provided our government with materials relating to Raoul Wallenberg. At the same time, the Central Committee of the party decided to check and clarify the circumstances of the death of the Swedish diplomat. This decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU has not yet been published.

In 1957, the Central Committee of the CPSU approved a draft memorandum of the Soviet government on the fate of Wallenberg, prepared by the Foreign Ministry (Foreign Minister Shepilov) and the KGB (Chairman Serov).

The Soviet government informed the Swedish government that the competent authorities had studied and verified the materials submitted by the Swedes about Raoul Wallenberg. Careful searches in the archives of the internal prison at Lubyanka, Lefortovskaya, as well as Vladimir and other prisons did not yield anything: they did not find any information about Wallenberg's stay in the Soviet Union (in 1947 there were: we informed the Foreign Ministry that Wallenberg was at the disposal of the MGB). After that, the competent authorities checked all archival documents of auxiliary services, and as a result, in the documents of the medical service of the internal prison on Lubyanka, they found a report by the head of this service, Smoltsov, addressed to the former Minister of State Security Abakumov. The report stated that the prisoner Wallenberg, personally known to the minister, died unexpectedly in his cell.

on the evening of July 17, 1947. The cause of death is a heart attack.

The memorandum ended, as it should be, with sincere regrets and deep condolences on the death of Raoul Wallenberg.

An important detail attracts attention: on the report of Smoltsov or on July 17, 1947, an addition was made that the death of Wallenberg was reported personally to the minister and the body was ordered to be cremated without an autopsy.

I believe that the destruction of the archive materials on the Wallenberg case began in the process of preparing the memorandum. This was apparently due to the fact that the direct initiators of his arrest and murder - Molotov and Bulganin - were still in power and occupied a leading position in the country's leadership. Bulganin, who signed the order for the arrest of Wallenberg, was the head of government, and Molotov, who ordered the liquidation of the Swedish diplomat, was a member of the top leadership of the state.

Our government officially acknowledged the arrest of Wallenberg, his imprisonment and death from a "heart attack" ten years after his death. It also stated that Raoul Wallenberg was illegally arrested on the orders of Abakumov, who, for the crimes he committed, including the arrest of Wallenberg suffered the most severe punishment.

It was a cynical lie. During the trial and investigation, Abakumov was not charged with such charges.

Until now, a note from Abakumov to Molotov has not been found in the KGB archives, which, probably, should have outlined the essence of the Wallenberg case and, apparently, contained proposals initiated by Vyshinsky, fatal to his fate. Although the note has not been found, traces of it, apparently, can be found in the correspondence of the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the chairman of the KGB with the leadership of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the government during the specified period of time. The registration log of the Molotov secretariat has a code number by which the passage of this document can be traced.

But in the archives of the KGB, as my son was told in the fall of 1994, they managed to find a document from which it follows that the chairman of the KGB, Serov, asked Molotov to accept him in the Wallenberg case in February 1957, when a draft memorandum was being prepared to the Swedish government recognizing the arrest of Wallenberg and his death.

So far, Serov's note has not been found, in which, before the official memorandum of the Soviet government was prepared, he was supposed to inform Khrushchev and Bulganin, respectively the first secretary of the Central Committee and the chairman of the Council of Ministers, about what really happened to Wallenberg.

Knowing Khrushchev's habits, I affirm that he kept Serov's note in his archive, which certainly contained serious compromising evidence on Molotov. For Khrushchev, this note was of significant importance in the context of the intensified struggle for power in early 1957, which ended, as you know, with the defeat of the so-called anti-party group of Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov and Shepilov who joined them. However, for reasons unclear to me, Khrushchev did not use the Wallenberg case against Molotov. I remember how the investigators were very persistent in eliciting information from me about Molotov's participation in secret deals with Western industrialists and diplomats, and I understood that their questions were far from random. However, Wallenberg's name did not appear then.

Serov had to apply to Khrushchev for permission to destroy the materials on the Wallenberg case. It is likely that after that they were destroyed. The reason is clear: Molotov was still in power in February 1957 and remained a very influential figure in the leadership. He, like other statesmen who were directly involved in scandalous and criminal actions, was interested in documentary

evidence has disappeared.

Serov's other letter must also be preserved, in which he was obliged to report Khrushchev that the Wallenberg case was destroyed.

The last time the Wallenberg case was investigated on the orders of Gorbachev under

observation of Bakatin, chairman of the KGB. A new investigation has confirmed that Wallenberg did indeed die in prison. It was also established that his investigative archival and prison files had been destroyed.

Probably, some details of the search for material on the Wallenberg case are known to Molotov's grandson Nikonov, a professor, a deputy of the State Duma, who was then Bakatin's assistant.

Unfortunately, archives, as well as manuscripts, alas, burn and are destroyed. But traces remain. Some finds are completely random and unexpected. So, a technical officer in the KGB archive, who had nothing to do with the investigation of the Wallenberg case, found his diplomatic passport and personal belongings in a package that had fallen out of a hefty bundle of unsorted documents.

After the high-profile scandal caused by the publication of my book in the West, in May 1994, at the request of the Russian-Swedish commission on the Wallenberg case, I wrote an explanation to the accounting and archival department of the Federal Security Service. My son spoke with Swedish representatives: finding out the truth about the Raoul Wallenberg case also depends to a large extent on the Swedish side, which stubbornly refuses to make public the data of his reports on contacts with German and American intelligence services in 1941-1945.

I think that someday researchers will still get to our and foreign archival materials, as happened with the Katyn case, and put an end to the tangled and tragic history of Wallenberg.

The attempt of our authorities, not without success, I must say, to hide the truth about Wallenberg is reminiscent of the case of the execution of Polish prisoners of war in 1940 in the Katyn forest near Smolensk and other places. It was only in 1992 that the archive materials of this case were published in the press, in particular, the report of the former KGB chairman Shelepin on the destruction of documents related to the criminal action (Shelepin turned to Khrushchev in 1959 to obtain permission to destroy them). All this suggests that the same was done with the Wallenberg case.

Although Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin handed over the documents to Lexy Walesa and the case of the Polish prisoners of war seems to have already been closed, the veil of secrecy has not yet been completely thrown off. The documents extracted from the KGB archives do not contain information about how this action was planned and carried out. Even those who were actively involved in the recruitment of Polish officers had no idea what fate awaited the prisoners of war who refused to cooperate with the NKVD. I assume that Reichman, who was involved in Polish affairs, knew about this.

An official government report stated that the Polish prisoners of war in the camps fell into the hands of the Germans and were shot. Indeed, some Polish officers were killed by German weapons. Then many, including myself, believed this version.

I first heard that we shot Polish prisoners of war from KGB Major General Kevorkov, Deputy General Director of TASS in the 80s. He said that Falin, who headed the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, had been reprimanded by Andropov in the 1970s for showing interest in the Katyn case and suggesting that a new investigation be opened. I was struck by the fact that, according to Kevorkov, the Central Committee was most concerned about how to hide the fact that the destruction of Polish officers was carried out by decision of the Politburo.

Speaking about the criminal mass extermination of Polish prisoners of war and the attempts of Khrushchev and Gorbachev to hide this tragedy, it should also be noted that, perhaps, the execution of Poles in 1940 was a kind of revenge, settling scores with ardent anti-Soviet, Polish officers, for the destruction of forty thousand (according to various sources, different figures) of our prisoners of war in Polish concentration camps after the defeat of the Red Army in 1920 near Warsaw.

In 1953, Eitingon and I were accused of organizing the liquidation of people objectionable to Beria with the help of poisons in special safe houses, in

country residences and these murders were presented as death from accidents. Abakumov was also accused of killing people he didn't like. Contrary to the requirements of the law, the names of "our victims" did not appear in either the indictment or the verdict in our cases. And this was not an accident or the result of the careless work of the investigators, no, they knew their business. There were simply no casualties, there were none. Neither I nor Eitingon took part in the settling of personal accounts of Beria and Abakumov with their opponents.

All secret liquidations of double agents and political opponents of Stalin, Molotov, Khrushchev in 1930-1950 were carried out by order of the government. That is why the specific military operations carried out by my subordinates together with the employees of "Laboratory-X" against enemies that were really dangerous for the Soviet state, as it seemed then, were not blamed either on me or on Eitingon. Abakumov, who personally gave orders on behalf of the government to conduct operations, they were also not blamed. Beria, in 1945-1953, had nothing to do with these matters and

didn't even know about them.

All the work of "Laboratory-X", not only scientific, was well known both to those who were investigating the case of Beria and Abakumov, and to the government and the Central Committee of the party, who observed and directed the course of the investigation into these cases and determined its content.

The indictment in my case alleged that it was I who oversaw the work of a top-secret toxicology laboratory that experimented with poisons on prisoners sentenced to death between 1942 and 1946. This accusation was dropped during my rehabilitation, because in the archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the KGB they found a regulation approved by the government that regulated all the activities of this laboratory and the procedure for reporting on its work. "Laboratory-X" was not under my control. I could not give orders to her boss Mairanovsky, nor use poisons against anyone, much less conduct experiments on people with them. And now they are trying to speculate with the testimony extorted from Mairanovsky, allegedly a member of the Zionist conspiracy in the MGB, which never existed, in order to discredit me and Eitingon. Moreover, this is done by people who are well aware of the fact that the use of testimony against rehabilitated people that have lost legal significance exposes them in an unsightly light.

In 1951, Mairanovsky, together with Eitingon, Raikhman, Matusov A. Sverdlov, were arrested and accused of illegal storage of weapons, as well as that they are participants in a Zionist conspiracy, the purpose of which is to seize power and destroy the top leaders of the state, including Stalin. Ryumin, who headed the investigation into this case, managed to extract fantastic confessions from Mairanovsky (he retracted them in 1958) and deputy head of the secretariat Abakumov Broverman. When, at the end of 1952, Ryumin, being Deputy Minister of State Security Ignatiev, was removed from his post, the investigative unit could not present an indictment against Mairanovsky in the form in which Ryumin had prepared it. The testimony of the head of the toxicological laboratory was not supported by the confessions of the doctors arrested in the Abakumov case, who had no idea about this laboratory.

None of the arrested doctors knew anything about Mairanovsky's secret activities: he himself conducted experiments with poisons on those sentenced to death in accordance with the procedure established by the government and the Ministry of State Security. Recording Mairanovsky's confession in full was too risky, since he referred to instructions from higher authorities and the awards he received. That is why his case was submitted to an extrajudicial body -

Special meeting under the Minister of State Security. Apparently, there were some plans to use Mairanovsky in the future as a witness against someone in the top leadership. He was allowed to live and in February 1953 was sentenced to ten years.

imprisonment for illegal possession of poisons and abuse of office.

Mairanovsky was convicted shortly before Stalin's death. When Beria again headed the security agencies, Mairanovsky sent him a huge number of applications for release, wrote about his innocence and referred to work under his direct supervision in 1938-1945. Beria, apparently, was going to release him, but was soon arrested himself. The prosecutor's office immediately used Mairanovsky's statements against himself, against Beria, Abakumov and Merkulov. Mairanovsky was now presented as Beria's accomplice in his mythical plans to eliminate the Soviet leadership with poisons.

I am aware of four facts of the liquidation of dangerous enemies of the Soviet state, as it was unequivocally understood then, carried out with the participation of Mairanovsky in 1946-1947. I mean the well-known Ukrainian nationalists, whom I have already talked about, as well as foreigners - Samet and Oggins.

Samet, a Polish engineer of Jewish nationality, interned by us in 1939, was engaged in top secret work on the use of captured German equipment on our submarines, which gave a great advantage in the duration of stay under water. Samet contacted the British: he was going to leave for Palestine. In order to introduce an agent into Samet's entourage and control his connections with foreigners, Eitingon was sent to Ulyanovsk, where everything was happening. Mairanovsky, who arrived later, together with an agent, a doctor at the factory polyclinic, injected Samet with curare poison during a preventive examination.

In 1992, General Volkogonov presented to the US Congress a list of Americans who died in the Soviet Union during the Second World War, as well as the Cold War, and on behalf of President Yeltsin expressed regret over their deaths. Oggins was also on that list. Eliminated Oggins, according to Volkogonov, so that he could not tell the truth about Soviet prisons and concentration camps.

In the West, by that time, the Gulag was quite well known, and the reason why Oggins was destroyed is not as simple as it was written in our newspapers. Judging by the publications, Oggins was illegally arrested by the NKVD and sentenced by the Special Conference to eight years in prison, allegedly for anti-Soviet propaganda. In fact, Oggins came to the Soviet Union on a fake Czechoslovak passport - there was not a word about this in the press. He really sympathized with communist ideas and was an unspoken member of the US Communist Party. Oggins was also an old Comintern and NKVD agent in China, the Far East and the USA. His wife Nora was part of the NKVD intelligence network in America and Western Europe and was responsible for maintaining our safe houses in France and the USA in 1938-1941. Oggins was arrested in 1938 on suspicion of a double game. His wife returned to the US in 1939. At first, she believed that her husband was in the Soviet Union for operational reasons, but then she realized that he had been arrested. We had reason to believe that Nora began to cooperate with the FBI and other American and Japanese intelligence agencies. She tried, perhaps on the instructions of American counterintelligence, to restore ties with our agents in America that had been interrupted since 1942. At the end of the war, Nora Oggins turned to the American authorities to help find her husband, hoping to secure his release. During the period of our good relations with America, an employee of the American embassy in Moscow was allowed to meet with Oggins in Butyrka prison, pursuing his own goals - to find out what the Americans knew about his activities.

After the failure of our intelligence network in the United States and Canada in 1946-1947, Molotov feared that if Oggins was also released, the Americans might bring him to the Un-American Activities Commission and use him as a witness against the US Communist Party. In addition, according to our intelligence services, Nora Oggins' contacts with the US authorities and cooperation with the FBI have already caused serious damage to our intelligence positions in the US and France.

Abakumov, knowing this, proposed to eliminate Oggins, the decision was made by Stalin and Molotov. In 1947, Mairanovsky, during a medical examination, gave Ottins, who was in prison, a fatal injection. Eitingon and I were instructed to organize his funeral at the Jewish cemetery in Penza and set the burial date as 1944 or 1945.

Now, remembering this man, I feel regret. But then, during the years of the Cold War, neither we nor the Americans thought about the moral aspects of eliminating dangerous opponents, double agents.

In the 60-70s and in 1990, the prosecutor's office, the KGB and the Party Control Committee under the Central Committee of the CPSU investigated cases of the use of poisons in the operations of special services. It was established that Mairanovsky was involved in the use of poisons by the secret services in 1937-1947. Since 1952, the use of poisons resumed without the participation of Mairanovsky and, as always, was regulated by the relevant government orders. None of those who really led all the actions on the use of poisons, either from the KGB commandant's office or from the operational and technical department, were even brought to administrative responsibility. Eitingon and I were made scapegoats.

The toxicological laboratory was established in 1921 under the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V.I. Lenin, long before Beria, and was called the "Special Cabinet". It is possible that Lenin asked Stalin to get him poison from the stocks of this laboratory - "cabinet".

The first head of the laboratory in the 30s was Professor Kazakov, his shot in 1938 in the process of Bukharin.

Research work on the topics of the laboratory was carried out by specialists from the Institute of Biochemistry under the guidance of Mairanovsky. In 1937, the laboratory - "cabinet" and Mairanovsky's research group were transferred to the NKVD. In the 60-70s it was called Special Laboratory No. 12 of the KGB Institute of Special and New Technologies.

The gloomy fame of the laboratory continued to excite the imagination of Soviet leaders. In 1988, Major General Shadrin of the KGB told me that the highest authority, that is, Gorbachev, was interested in the practice of eliminating political rivals in the old days. Then rumors spread that the chairman of the KGB, Semichastny, in 1964 allegedly refused to carry out Brezhnev's hint-order to secretly eliminate Khrushchev. However, Semichastny, according to Shadrin, refused to provide a written explanation on the matter in 1988 or 1989.

In 1990, Oleg Kalugin and I were summoned to the prosecutor's office. I was interrogated in the case of Oggins, Kalugin in the case of Markov, a Bulgarian dissident killed in London, where he worked for the BBC in 1978. Kalugin confirmed to the prosecutor what he had said in his speeches to the press.

He, holding the position of head of the foreign counterintelligence service of the KGB, advised the Bulgarian intelligence in carrying out the operation to eliminate Markov with the help of poison obtained from the Special Laboratory, which was previously headed by Mairanovsky. Markov died from an injection with an umbrella made in this laboratory.

Kalugin's participation in the operation carried out by the Bulgarian intelligence corresponded to his official duties: he was responsible for measures to combat Western intelligence agencies abroad and had to assist the intelligence services of the socialist countries. Markov was considered at that time a prominent agent of British intelligence. As I was told, the Bulgarian government awarded Kalugin an order and a Browning for this operation. Not so long ago, Kalugin said that he received the Order of the Red Banner for another liquidation - the abduction in Vienna of a Soviet defector, Navy officer Artamonov, carried out using toxicological drugs, from which Artamonov died in his arms.

Kalugin's explanation of his participation in the liquidation and abduction of those objectionable to the Soviet

the government of the people was similar to mine. Another question: for our so-called "democratic public" Kalugin is a fighter for justice and human rights, and I, to put it mildly, am an odious person.

Kalugin and the press that supported him rightly raised the question of control over the work of the toxicological divisions of the special services. However, in my opinion, it's not just about control. Toxicological laboratories will always be part of the technical support services for the activities of state security and intelligence agencies.

Criminal abuses in this area have also been established in CIA operations. In 1977, Ogorodnik, a Foreign Ministry official who was a CIA agent, committed suicide by swallowing a vial of poison at the time of his arrest. However, before that, with the sanction of the CIA, he liquidated, with the help of a hidden poison manufactured in the USA, an innocent woman, a Soviet citizen, who had some reason to suspect him of espionage.

The question arises: is the use of drugs or poisons justified in the fight against terrorism? Of course, the death sentence or the destruction of a terrorist must be carried out in strict accordance with the requirements of the law. Unfortunately, the legal aspects of the actions of special services in a combat situation, for example, in the forced liquidation of dangerous terrorists, have not been developed either here or abroad.

However, the danger lies in the fact that such a powerful weapon can be used by the ruling regime to destroy unwanted people, political opponents and rivals, as has already happened in our history. Of course, the toxicological service must obey strict rules and be controlled. But, I repeat, it's not just about control - the status of the staff is important.

I think that employees of the toxicological units of the special services should not be on active military service. This will allow to control their actions within the framework of the real Prosecutor's supervision. Not being military personnel, they will not have to obey in their actions the requirements of the disciplinary Charter of the Armed Forces, according to which the order of the chief is the law of the day of the subordinate, and the highest official who issued it bears criminal liability for illegally issued military orders. Maybe this will become some kind of guarantee against abuses in the use of toxicological services in the political struggle.

What I have told will seem sketchy to some, an attempt to hide the work of "Laboratory-X" from the public. terrible. In the past, the head of the laboratory, who was responsible for its work, showed that I, like the heads of other independent services and departments of the MGB-KGB, had the most general idea of the work of the laboratory and no participation in the activities of the toxicological unit did not accept.

For the first time this material, but, of course, in a different form, I submitted to the Central Committee of the CPSU in the 60s, in my statements, seeking first release from prison, then rehabilitation. It is in vain that so-called democratic journalists try to accuse me of concealing unfavorable circumstances, but at the same time they use facts from my book published in the West, without reference to it (for example, Waksberg's publication of the Oggins case in Literary Gazette) .

“CALIFORNIA IN CRIMEA”

In 1942-1945, the so-called Jewish question, in the light of relations with the allies, acquired significant significance in the foreign and domestic policy of the Soviet state.

The Kremlin hoped to receive significant funds for the restoration of the national economy under the guise of providing assistance to the Jewish population of the USSR, which had suffered from the Nazi invasion. The government, continuing the old line of flirting with

Zionist circles, sought to use the "Palestinian question" as a trump card in negotiations with the British, who feared for their positions in the Middle East and prevented the mass resettlement of Jews in Palestine and the formation of a Jewish state there.

In the early 1920s, when Soviet power was just getting on its feet, there were quite a few people with Jewish surnames among leaders at all levels. I note that at that time there were no passports, so no one officially divided people according to nationality.

In 1922-1923, many Jewish and other nationalist organizations were liquidated in the country and their leaders were arrested. One of the most active groups of this kind was, for example, "Poalei Zion" in Odessa, members of this underground organization, having managed to neutralize the surveillance service, lured several security officers to an abandoned cemetery and severely beat them. Another underground group, the Haganah, originated in Zhytomyr, but, ironically, it was the GPU-Jews who worked in this city who were assigned to lead the operation against this Jewish nationalist group. Among the defeated Jewish organizations was the Bund, which was part of the socialist international. The Jewish Communist Party, which had previously broken away from the Bund, was also dissolved: this was in line with our policy of eliminating any factions of communist parties built on a national basis, both within the CPSU (b) and outside it. By the way, the so-called Ukrainian Communist Party was dissolved at the same time. The Communist Party of Ukraine (Bolsheviks) became the only ruling party in the republic and the only one, except for the CPSU (b) - the CPSU, which had its own Politburo.

The leaders of these Jewish organizations were either expelled or went abroad. They were allowed to do this: until 1928, there were virtually no obstacles to traveling abroad in the country, and the procedure was very simple. The Soviet Jews no longer had their own nationalist organizations, and gradually there was what can be called an intense process of assimilation. If we talk about the Jewish intelligentsia, then it has completely lost its political significance. In 1933, in connection with collectivization, a passport system was introduced to strictly control urban residence and simplify the recording of population movements. The Jews were singled out as a separate national group, although they did not have their own state education.

In all major departments, Jews at that time occupied an influential position. I recall that in 1939 we received a verbal directive obliging us - this happened already after the mass repressions - to monitor what percentage of people of one nationality or another is in the leadership of the most responsible, from the point of view of security, departments. But this directive turned out to be much deeper in its design than I expected. For the first time, the quota system came into effect. Fortunately, most of my comrades-in-arms had by this time achieved great success, proved their loyalty to the Party, and were not subject to this new directive.

The formation of the Jewish Autonomous Region with the center of Birobidzhan was undertaken by Stalin to strengthen the border regime in the Far East by creating a kind of barrier there, and not at all as a step towards the creation of a Jewish state. The border in these places was often violated by Chinese and White Guard terrorist groups. Stalin's idea was to put a barrier in their path in the form of settlements, whose inhabitants are hostile to the white emigrants, and especially to the Cossacks. The status of the region was far-sightedly defined as an autonomous region, and not a republic, which meant: there would be neither its own legislative body, nor the supreme court, nor the administrative structures of the ministerial level. Although the region had autonomy, it was only a border special territory, and not a political center.

Before the war, there was an idea at the top to use the leaders of the socialist Bund - Henryk Erlich and Viktor Alger for foreign policy purposes. Former Deputy

Head of the 2nd Counterintelligence Directorate, General Reichman, told me in 1970 that these Bund leaders were arrested by us in Eastern Poland in September-October 1939. When the war with Germany began, they were released in September 1941. At a meeting with Beria, they were offered to create a Jewish anti-Hitler committee: it was originally planned that Erlich would be the chairman of the committee, Mikhoels would be his deputy, and Alter would be the executive secretary. The plan had to be abandoned because Erlich and Alter knew too much about Stalin's intentions to use them to extort money from the West. In December 1941, Alter and Ehrlich were again arrested, although no charges were brought against them. On December 27, 1941, Erlich appealed to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Kalinin, protesting against the arrest and proving that he was a supporter of the Soviet government and was ready to cooperate with the NKVD.

From this letter it was clear that it was the NKVD who sought to initiate the creation of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC) through Erlich. The main task of the committee, the letter said, should be intensive propaganda among the Jewish communities of the United States and England of the position of the Jews in the Soviet Union in order to obtain the maximum assistance needed by the USSR in the struggle against Hitler's aggression. All JAC proposals received the full approval of the leadership, and the NKVD was instructed to select a suitable location for the committee's headquarters. At the head of the JAC were: Mikhoels, chief director and wonderful actor of the Jewish State Theatre, Fefer, a popular poet, and Epstein, a publicist and literary critic.

Ehrlich never received a reply to his letter. The archives show that in December, Beria ordered that Erlich and Alter be transferred to solitary cells. These prisoners were known as numbers 41 and 42, and it was forbidden to interrogate them or fill out registration cards for them in the Kuibyshev NKVD prison where they were held. General Reichman later told me that there was a special order that even the prison staff had no right to know their real names. These instructions came from Stalin, Molotov and Beria.

In 1942, the American politician Wendell Wilkie and William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, sent an inquiry about the fate of Erlich and Alter through the Soviet ambassador to America, Litvinov. The Polish Ambassador to Moscow, Stanislaw Kot, addressed us with a similar request. Deputy Foreign Minister Vyshinsky, in his reply to Cat, hinted that Erlich and Alter had been pardoned by mistake: both of them, as established, secretly colluded with the Germans. At the end of 1942, Wilkie contacted us with a new request, but until February 1943 he did not receive any answer. Molotov, meanwhile, instructed Litvinov to announce that on December 23, 1941, Erlich and Alter were shot, because in October and November of that year they systematically engaged in treacherous activities, made attempts to disseminate hostile information in the Soviet Union aimed at ending hostilities and signing a peace treaty with fascist Germany.

It was a deliberate lie. Erlich committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell on May 14, 1942. Alter remained in solitary confinement until February 17, 1943, and was secretly shot on Beria's orders. At the time of the events described, I knew nothing of their fate. Everything I write about them took place before Mikhoels' visit to the United States.

Only in September 1992, from a publication in the weekly newspaper of the Ministry of Internal Affairs "Shield and Sword", did the true fate of Erlich and Alter become known. They were destroyed in order to hide the secret unofficial contacts of the Soviet leadership with influential representatives of foreign Jewish communities. Erlich and Alter were eliminated also because Stalin was afraid of their political influence outside the Soviet Union.

Immediately after the formation of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, Soviet intelligence decided to use the connections of the Jewish intelligentsia to find out how to get

additional economic assistance in the fight against Nazi Germany through Zionist circles. Ever since 1925, on the directive of Dzerzhinsky, we have been actively developing and infiltrating the Zionist organizations in the USA, Western Europe and Palestine. Serebryansky managed to create a particularly extensive network of agents in the Zionist movement in the early 1930s. Now the JAK could be a cover for the restoration of agent positions in the Zionist movement, lost in 1938 in connection with the arrest of almost the entire operational staff of the Serebryansky group.

To this end, Mikhoels and Fefer, our trusted agent, were assigned to probe the reaction of influential foreign Zionist organizations to the creation of a Jewish republic in the Crimea. This task of special reconnaissance sounding is the establishment of contacts with the American Zionist movement in 1943-1944 under the leadership of our residency in the United States was successfully carried out. I also recall that during this period, the Soviet leadership really thought about the possibility of creating a Jewish republic in the Crimea on the basis of the three national Jewish regions that existed there before the war. At the suggestion of Molotov, the leadership of the JAC prepared a letter addressed to Stalin with a proposal to create a Jewish republic in the Crimea.

The letter, in particular, stated (first published incompletely in 1993 in Literaturnaya Gazeta) that the creation of the Jewish Soviet Republic in accordance with Bolshevik principles and in the spirit of the Leninist-Stalinist national policy would once and for all solve the problem of the legal statehood of the Jewish people and further development of its centuries-old culture. No one has been able to solve this problem for centuries. It can finally be resolved only in our great socialist country.

This letter, recorded in the registration logs kept in the party archives, has not yet been fully declassified. It was not shown when, during President Yeltsin's visit in 1992, JAC archival materials were shown in Washington.

On February 15, 1944, a draft letter was presented to Molotov. At his direction, Lozovsky, Molotov's deputy, edited this document. The letter was forwarded to Molotov and a new date was set - February 21. Three days later it was registered with the secretariat of the government of the USSR under the number M-23314 and on the same day sent to the secretary of the Central Committee Malenkov, the secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee and the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Armed Forces Shcherbakov and the chairman of the State Planning Commission Voznesensky with instructions to consider this issue.

I must note that Litvinov, being ambassador to the United States during the war years, in his correspondence with Molotov and the NKVD strongly opposed ties with the Zionist movement, as well as against our active participation in solving the Palestinian problem. I do not remember the exact motivations for Litvinov's position, but its meaning was that our possible influence on the Zionist movement would be extremely insignificant. Therefore, Litvinov considered it expedient to entrust all contacts with Zionist circles exclusively to employees of the Soviet secret services, or to specially verified agents. There is nothing surprising in these recommendations: heading the militant underground organization of the Bolsheviks before the revolution, Litvinov had a very extensive experience in intelligence and operational work, including in attracting people from circles hostile to it to cooperate with the Bolshevik

Our operative Kheifetz, who was very successful in obtaining materials from the United States on the atomic bomb, told me that the letter in question was, in essence, a proposal for the formation of a Jewish republic in the Crimea, where Jews from all over the world could come. This, of course, would require the resettlement of the inhabitants of the Crimea. In March and April 1944, the Crimean Tatars were deported: one hundred and fifty thousand people were evicted from the Crimea and transported to Uzbekistan. The fact that the letter, on the one hand, and the deportation order, on the other, are practically dated on the same date (February 15 and 14, respectively) is a coincidence. Stalin's order to expel the Crimean Tatars, who were accused of mass cooperation with the Germans, was signed

earlier, but he got to be executed by Beria the day before the letter from the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was received.

The coordination and execution of Stalin's plan to attract Jewish capital was entrusted to Heifetz and our resident in Washington, Zarubin, who organized Mikhoels' trip to America in 1943.

Before going to the United States, Mikhoels summoned Beria to the Lubyanka and instructed him on how to establish extensive contacts with American Jews. Our plan was to enlist the support of the American public and obtain the loans needed to develop the steel and coal industries. Mikhoels and Fefer brilliantly coped with their mission.

The success of Mikhoels' trip to America immediately made him suspicious in Stalin's eyes. No wonder, because he, a representative of Jewish culture, became a true hero, known throughout the world, so he was destined for the fate of Erlich and Alter.

The role of Mikhoels and Fefer was also significant in the intelligence operation to reach out to the circles of scientists close to Einstein, who were engaged in the development of an unknown "superweapon" at that time. These people met with the Konenkovs, Russian emigrants close to the Einstein family, and through them, though verbally, we received important information about the prospects for a new "superweapon" discussed at Princeton with the participation of Fermi and Oppenheimer. In addition to the Zarubins, Heifen and Pastelnyak, in addition to the Zarubins, coordinated all this work through our intelligence in the United States.

It was rumored that Mikhoels might be offered the post of chairman of the Supreme Soviet in the Jewish Republic. Apart from Molotov, Lozovsky and several senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mikhoels was the only person who knew about the existence of Stalin's plan to create a Jewish state in the Crimea. In this way, Stalin expected to receive 10 billion dollars from the West to restore the war-ravaged economy.

I did not know about the details of the letter from the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee to Stalin. Beria was aware that our initiative was supported by the American side, or rather - Jewish organizations in the United States, since he personally received both Mikhoels and Fefer after a trip to America. I personally viewed the discussion of the creation of a Jewish republic within the Soviet Union as a kind of probing by the West in order to find out how far their plans for providing us with economic assistance after the end of the war would go. However, the decision on the creation of a Jewish republic was postponed until the end of the war, and the letter lay dormant for four years, with all sorts of rumors circulating about its contents. Then, already in 1948, Malenkov used it to conduct a campaign against members of the JAC, and later against the old guard in the leadership of the country. Molotov, Mikoyan, Voroshilov, Voznesensky and, finally, Beria himself, involved in the discussion of the creation of a Jewish republic on the territory of Crimea, themselves, because they had Jewish relatives, were vulnerable during this campaign.

The plan to attract American capital was, as I already mentioned, connected with the idea of creating a Jewish republic in the Crimea, the so-called "Crimean California". This idea was widely discussed in American Jewish circles, as Heifetz told me. According to him, the president of the American Chamber of Commerce, Eric Johnston, was especially interested in the project, who in June 1943, together with the American ambassador Averell Harriman, was received by Stalin to discuss the problems of the revival of the areas that were the main Jewish settlements in Belarus, and the resettlement of Jews in the Crimea. Johnston painted a very rosy picture for Stalin, saying that long-term American loans would be made available to the Soviet Union after the war for this purpose.

The idea of creating a Jewish socialist republic in the Crimea was openly discussed in Moscow not only among the Jewish population, but also in the highest echelons.
authorities.

It is known that Mikhoels, as chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, relied heavily on Fefer, a major NKVD agent (Mikhoels, of course, did not know about this), who was "guided" by State Security Commissar Reichman. It happened that Beria himself received Fefer at the safe house to discuss the issue of creating a Jewish republic in the Crimea.

Until June 1945, this project seemed to remain in force and should have already been implemented. During the preparations for the Yalta Conference, Harriman asked me and Molotov's assistant Novikov how things were going with the formation of the Jewish Republic in connection with future American loans for this project. I remember seeing a report that, immediately after the war, Stalin discussed with a delegation of American senators a plan to create a Jewish republic in the Crimea and revive the Gomel region, a place of compact residence of Jews in Belarus. He asked them not to limit loans and technical assistance to these two regions, but to provide it without being tied to specific projects.

Then, in June 1945, after Yalta and the victory over Nazi Germany, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a decree: Crimea became an administrative region within the RSFSR. Meanwhile, before the war, Crimea was an autonomous republic with a significant representation of the Tatar population in all administrative structures. In November 1945, when Harriman attempted to contact Stalin through Molotov to discuss matters of economic cooperation, his request for a face-to-face meeting was denied at Stalin's direction.

After the war, Stalin preferred to pursue a different line: attempts to infiltrate the ranks of the Zionist movement intensified. Until 1948, Great Britain had a mandate from the League of Nations to administer the territory of Palestine. Stalin and Molotov hoped to calm the British, who were afraid of being thrown out of Palestine after the creation of a Jewish state there. The project of Jewish autonomy in the Crimea was supposed to divert the attention of the leaders of world Jewry from Palestine as the only option for solving the Jewish problem. When at the end of 1945 it became clear that Stalin did not consider himself connected with the former unofficial sounding, the British and Americans organized the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine without the participation of the Soviet Union. This contradicted the previously reached agreement on joint consultations of the military allies on the Palestinian problem.

And in April 1946, Deputy Foreign Ministers Dekanozov and Vyshinsky sent a memo to the government, where they emphasized that the interests of the Soviet Union were ignored: the Palestinian issue would be resolved without the participation of our states. In this document, they proposed to pursue a policy of favorable attitude towards the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine .

With the consent of Molotov, Vyshinsky publishes under a pseudonym an article in the journal *Novoye Vremya*, in which he speaks of the need to create a democratic Jewish state in the mandated territory of Palestine. The calculation was to strengthen the Soviet position in the Middle East and at the same time undermine British influence in the Arab countries that opposed the emergence of a new state, showing that the British were not able to stop the Jews in their desire to create their own state.

Simultaneously with the political steps being taken, orders were received in 1946 to send our agents to Palestine via Rumania. They were supposed to create an illegal intelligence network in Palestine, which could be used in combat and sabotage operations against the British. For this purpose, I singled out three officers: Garbuz, Semyonov (real name Taubman - he was Grigulevich's assistant in the Lithuanian underground and helped liquidate Rudolf Klement in Paris in 1938) and Kolesnikov. Garbuz and Kolesnikov had experience of guerrilla warfare in Ukraine and Belarus, where they participated in operations against the German occupation authorities.

Semenov and Kolesnikov settled in Haifa and created two intelligence networks, but did not take part in sabotage against the British. Kolesnikov managed to organize the delivery from Romania to Palestine of small arms and anti-tank grenades captured from the Germans. Semyonov, for his part, tried to renew contact with our agent in the Stern organization. It was an anti-British terrorist group, where Serebryansky managed to send his man in 1937. Garbuz remained in Romania, selecting candidates there for future resettlement in Israel.

From the very beginning it was clear to me that while helping the Jews, it would seem, we actually set ourselves the task of creating our own network of agents within the Zionist political and military structure. Jews aspired to independence and were closely associated with America. But we were not sure that we would be able to influence them, as in Eastern Europe. However, we considered it extremely important to indicate to a certain extent our presence there. As Kheifetz told me, back in 1943, Litvinov, in his message to Molotov from Washington, emphasized that

Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state will become one of the main issues post-war world politics.

In the second half of 1946, Stalin took a position of active opposition to the activities of international Jewish organizations and British-American policy on the Palestinian issue - he was irritated by the demands of Soviet Jews to improve their living conditions when they returned from evacuation. He began to warm up the anti-Semitic campaign in the USSR: purges began in the party apparatus, the diplomatic service, the military leadership and intelligence. The campaign culminated in the "doctors' conspiracy" and accusations of Jewish doctors of Zionism. The anti-Semitic campaign was a repetition of the purges of the 1930s, yet another Stalinist maneuver to reshuffle the entire party and Soviet apparatus in order to replace the old leadership - Molotov, Mikoyan, Beria and others with new people who would not threaten his position as the sole ruler of the country.

In October 1946, the bogey of Jewish bourgeois nationalism was raised for the first time as a threat to communist ideology. Abakumov, who had just been appointed Minister of State Security, in a letter to the leader, entwined the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in nationalist propaganda, in that, in his opinion, they put Jewish interests above the interests of the Soviet country. Such an accusation sounded like a serious warning. Heifetz, who excelled in obtaining information on the atomic bomb and managed to establish high-level contacts in the American Jewish community, fell out of favor. He continued to work in the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee as Secretary for Foreign Relations, but was forced to cut off his contacts with the American Jewish community.

In the letter, Abakumov accused the committee of taking upon itself the functions of representing the interests of the Jewish population at the end of the war when returning property to people who returned to their native lands. Thousands of Jews during the war fled from Kyiv, Minsk, Riga, Leningrad and Moscow, fleeing from the advancing German troops. The Nazis came under the slogans of liberating Ukrainians and Balts from "Jewish domination." This found fertile ground among the nationalists who seized houses, apartments and other property of Jews. When the surviving Jews began to return home in 1945, they saw that their property was in the wrong hands.

I remember how Khrushchev, then the secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, called Usman Yusupov, the secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, and complained to him that Jews evacuated during the war to Tashkent and Samarkand were "flocking to Ukraine like crows." In this conversation, which took place in 1947, he stated that he simply did not have a place to receive everyone, since the city was destroyed, and it was necessary to stop this flow, otherwise pogroms would begin in Kiev. I was in Yusupov's office at that moment, and he recounted this conversation to me, since I came to him with a request to resettle three thousand Kurds who had fled from Iran to Azerbaijan, led by Barzani. It was extremely da

leave them in the Caucasus, and the leadership decided to resettle the Kurds in Uzbekistan. At that time it was difficult to find **material** for the Jewish intelligentsia returning to Kiev. The problem of their accommodation could not be solved by creating several collective farms, as was done for the Kurdish refugees.

The chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, Mikhoels, did his best to protect the interests of Jews in property and housing matters. Abakumov, on the other hand, sought to prove that the committee's attempt to protect the interests of Jewish refugees was a manifestation of Jewish bourgeois nationalism. His letter reflected the concerns of local party leaders who had to deal with these issues. The behavior of Mikhoels, speaking on behalf of the Jews returning home, not only alarmed Stalin, it increased his suspicion. And really, just imagine: in the Soviet system, with a strict hierarchy, a person with international prestige and an impeccable reputation suddenly appears and begins to act on his own initiative.

The situation worsened even more in 1947. I remember a verbal instruction from Obruchnikov, Deputy Minister of State Security for Personnel, not to accept Jews for officer positions in the state security organs. I could not imagine that such an openly anti-Semitic order came directly from Stalin, and I believed that all this was the work of Abakumov. It became clear to me that the grandiose plan to use the Soviet Jewish intelligentsia to strengthen international cooperation with world Jewry was rejected. Eitingon, who constantly complained about the harassment of his relatives at the university and in medical institutions, was convinced that anti-Semitism was an essential element of state policy. Looking back, I admit that he understood the situation much better than I did.

Beria and Bogdan Kobulov often told me that Stalin loved anti-Muslim and anti-Azerbaijani jokes and anecdotes, especially when they were told in the presence of Bagirov, the first secretary of the Azerbaijani Communist Party, who simply could not stand Kobulov's mocking intonations, who spoke Russian words with an Azerbaijani accent. This makes me think that the humor directed against this or that national group was to Stalin's liking and that he was essentially an anti-Semite no more than an anti-Muslim.

Stalin and his closest aides showed interest in the Jewish question in order to extract political dividends in the struggle for power and to consolidate their forces. Thus began the anti-Semitic "games" in the highest party echelons. After Stalin launched a campaign against the cosmopolitans in 1946-1947, anti-Semitism began to be accepted as the official line of the party by middle-level leadership and rank and file officials. The term "rootless cosmopolitan" became synonymous with the word "Jew": it meant that Soviet citizens of Jewish nationality shared the worldview of the Jews of the West and, therefore, could not be completely devoted to the Soviet state.

The campaign against the cosmopolitans coincided with a change in the balance of political power around Stalin. Malenkov was demoted, and Beria was removed from overseeing any affairs related to state security. Rumors began to circulate that Molotov and he surrounded themselves with Jews.

Stalin's efforts after the war were aimed at extending the influence of the Soviet Union, first to the countries of Eastern Europe, located on our borders, and then everywhere where Great Britain competed with us. Stalin foresaw that the Arab countries would turn towards the Soviet Union, disillusioned with the British and Americans because of their support for Israel. The Arabs therefore had to appreciate the anti-Zionist tendencies in Soviet foreign policy. Molotov's assistant Vetrov, later our ambassador to Denmark, recounted Stalin's words to me: "Let's agree with the formation of Israel. It will be like a needle in the ass for the Arab states and make them

turn your back on Britain. Ultimately, British influence will be completely undermined in Egypt, Syria, Turkey and Iraq."

The Cold War began in earnest in 1946-1947, when the illusions about our post-war cooperation with the West disappeared. Allied relations during the war with England and America turned into a confrontation. The civil war in China became more and more intense; tensions also rose in Italy and France, where the communists were engaged in a bitter political struggle for power. With the onset of the Cold War, our hopes of receiving Jewish capital disappeared. It became clear to the country's leadership that it was no longer necessary to rely on the support of Jewish business circles abroad and their investments.

And the first victim of the change of course was Mikhoels, who was at the very center of the discussions to create a Jewish republic in the Crimea.

In addition, Stalin received operational materials stating that Mikhoels allegedly seeks to enlist the support of his son-in-law G. Moroz in order to ensure in the Soviet leadership a solution of the Jewish question that is beneficial to him, to improve the situation of the Jewish population and the development of Jewish culture. The MGB also suspected that through Mikhoels' connections with Zionist organizations in America, some tragic events in the life of the Alliluyevs, Stalin's relatives, became known. Stalin probably feared that Mikhoels' great personal authority might be used by the international Zionist movement for its own purposes. Mikhoels enjoyed worldwide fame and, of course, was a strong, outstanding personality, therefore, under the conditions of the totalitarian regime of that time, there could be no question of using a well-established scheme of arrest and reprisal against him, covered with a fig-leaf trial.

Mikhoels was liquidated in the so-called special order in January 1948. Fortunately, I had nothing to do with this operation. The details of the murder became known to me only in April 1953. I remember that this operation was directly led by Abakumov's deputy Ogoltsov and the Minister of State Security of Belarus Tsanava. Mikhoels and Golubov, who accompanied him, were lured to Tsanava's dacha under the pretext of meeting with leading Belarusian actors, they were given a deadly injection and thrown under the wheels of a truck to stage a bandit run-in on the outskirts of Minsk. An employee of the transport department of the MGB on the Belarusian Railway was driving the truck.

Golubov was an MGB agent among the creative intelligentsia, which Mikhoels, of course, did not know. In that situation, however, he turned out to be an unwanted witness, since it was with his help that Mikhoels was brought to the dacha.

The news of the death of Mikhoels aroused suspicions in my soul, about which I did not tell anyone. However, I could not imagine that Ogoltsov himself would go to Minsk to personally direct the operation. The murder was committed, as I believed, by some anti-Semitic bandit, who was told in advance where and when he could find a person who imagined himself to be a spokesman for Jewish interests.

For most of 1948, I was concerned with the Berlin Crisis and the creation of a Kurdish underground network in Iran, Iraq and Turkey to overthrow the government of Nuri Said and Faisal in Iraq, as well as Czechoslovak affairs. I flew to Prague with Zubov to try to neutralize the supporters of President Benes in the transfer of power to the new government headed by Gottwald.

In 1947 my wife became seriously ill and soon retired. Back in 1940, she showed enough wisdom to move away from operational work and was appointed senior teacher of special disciplines at the Higher School of the NKVD (later the MGB). From time to time she was used to contact female agents of particular interest to the leadership of the counterintelligence department, but for the most part she tried to keep a low profile and not draw attention to herself. Her illness coincided with

a campaign to purge Jews in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1949 and went through the personnel lists under her maiden name Kaganova.

In 1949 and 1950, when I had to travel frequently to Prague, Western Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, Eitingon performed my duties in the intelligence and sabotage bureau. He visited Emma and told her about the anti-Semitic campaign, which was gaining momentum and taking on more and more scope. Eitingon's sister Sonya, a well-known therapist and head physician of the polyclinic of the automobile plant (now ZIL), was arrested, my wife's younger sister Elizaveta was expelled from the graduate school of the medical institute in Kyiv. We tried to somehow help them, using friendly relations with Muzichenko, director of MONIKI in Moscow. In the 1930s, he was an illegal NKVD immigrant in France and Austria, but in 1938 he left intelligence and was able to return to his former profession as a doctor. He hired Elizabeth, who, by the way, still works at this institute.

The news of Heifetz's arrest in 1948 or 1949 came as a great shock to me: here intercession, either mine or Eitingon's, was useless. Both he and I connected this arrest with the anti-Semitic campaign. As a result, almost all members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and other figures of Jewish culture were arrested and put on trial on charges of plotting to separate Crimea from the USSR.

The internal struggle for power between 1948 and 1952 caused a new wave of anti-Semitism - the "Doctors' Plot" arose. Although it was part of an anti-Semitic campaign, it was not limited to Jews alone. Rather, it can be said that the "doctors' case" was a continuation of the struggle in which old scores were settled in the country's leadership. Stalin, with the help of Malenkov and Khrushchev, wanted to purge the ranks of the old guard and remove Beria. Molotov, Voroshilov and Mikoyan, those "last of the Mohicans" in the Stalinist Politburo, were to become the main figures in the notorious "doctors' case". However, the whole truth about the "doctors' case" was never made public, even during the period of Gorbachev's glasnost. The reason is that it was about a dirty struggle for power that unfolded in the Kremlin before Stalin's death and captured essentially the entire leadership.

It is generally accepted that the "Doctors' Plot" began with a hysterical letter to Stalin, in which Jewish doctors were accused of hatching plans to kill the leaders of the country with the help of wrong methods of treatment and poisons. The author of the letter was Lidia Timashuk, a doctor in the Kremlin polyclinic, who had become notorious. Timashuk's letter, however, was not sent to Stalin in 1952, on the eve of the doctors' arrests, but in August 1948. It claimed that Academician Vinogradov had mistreated Zhdanov and other leaders, resulting in Zhdanov's death. Then Stalin's reaction was expressed in contemptuous "nonsense", and the letter went to the archive. There it remained without any movement for three years, until it was removed at the end of 1951. The letter was needed as a tool in the struggle for power. All members of the Politburo knew about the letter - they also knew about the Stalinist reaction. However, the most important thing is that Timashuk did not accuse anyone of conspiracy. In the letter, she only signaled the shortcomings and omissions that had taken place, half invented, in providing treatment to the leaders of the party and state. For this reason, the text of the letter has not yet been published, it sets out, in essence, the mutual claims of the medical staff to each other, as a rule, of a quarrelsome nature. Colonel Ludwigov, Beria's assistant for the Politburo and the Council of Ministers, told me about this already in the Vladimir prison.

I always believed that Abakumov started the "doctors' case" as a continuation of the campaign against cosmopolitans. However, in 1990, when I got to the military prosecutor's office, where I was called as a witness in connection with a new investigation into the Abakumov case in the post-war years, I learned something else. It turned out that he was not the initiator of the "doctors' case", on the contrary, Abakumov, who was arrested in 1951, was accused of concealing information about a conspiracy aimed at killing Stalin. He did this ostensibly in order to seize power. Wherein

Abakumov, according to his accusers, relied on Jewish doctors and Jewish employees in the apparatus of the Minister of State Security, in particular on Eitingon.

Malenkov and Beria undoubtedly sought to eliminate Abakumov, and both were ready to use any means to achieve their goal. Sukhanov, an assistant to Malenkov, in the spring of 1951, received in the reception room of the Central Committee the investigator of the Investigative Unit for Especially Important Cases of the MGB, Lieutenant Colonel Ryumin, known for his anti-Semitism. The result of this meeting became fatal for the fate of the Soviet Jewish intelligentsia. At that time, Ryumin was afraid of being fired from the state security agencies due to a reprimand he received for leaving a folder with the investigation materials on the official bus. In addition, he hid from the party and the state security personnel department that his father was a fist, that his brother and sister were accused of stealing, and that his father-in-law served in Kolchak's army.

We must pay tribute to Abakumov: he was well aware that the attempts made earlier by Ryumin to present the arrested doctors as terrorists were just a prelude to the "doctors' case". For several months in 1950, he somehow managed to keep Ryumin in check. In order to save his career and give vent to his anti-Semitic sentiments, Ryumin willingly met Sukhanov's demand to write a letter to Stalin exposing Abakumov.

Thirty years after the events described, my relative, who worked as a typist in Malenkov's secretariat (her immediate supervisor was Sukhanov), told me that Ryumin was so uneducated and illiterate that he rewrote his letter eleven times with accusations against Abakumov. Sukhanov kept him in the waiting room for about six hours, while he himself negotiated with Malenkov about the content of the letter to Stalin. Only Sukhanov knows why Ryumin was chosen to accuse Abakumov of conspiracy. However, he did not say anything about this side of the matter when he appeared on Russian television in July 1992 in a program about the history of the "conspiracy of doctors".

In his letter accusing Abakumov (at the suggestion of Malenkov), Ryumin stated that he ordered the Investigative Unit not to proceed with materials on a Zionist conspiracy directed against the leaders of the Soviet state.

By this time, a number of well-known Jewish doctors had already been arrested for anti-Soviet Zionist propaganda. Perhaps the most famous of them, the world-famous specialist Etinger, tragically died in prison during interrogation. This happened even before Abakumov's arrest. Ryumin accused Abakumov of being responsible for Etinger's death, as he deliberately placed him in a cold cell in Lefortovo prison in order to remove one of the participants in the "doctors' conspiracy" and thereby prevent him from betraying other Zionist conspirators. To make these accusations more convincing, Timashuk's letter was extracted from the archive.

Abakumov, more experienced in such intrigues than Ryumin, was afraid to exaggerate the "Zionist conspiracy" by resorting to too obvious falsifications. He foresaw that Stalin might demand real evidence in this highly risky provocative game. In addition, Abakumov knew perfectly well that in cases where the initiative belonged to the top leadership, it was not supposed to show one's own. Some of the arrested physicians were Stalin's attending physicians. Many of them were sometimes associated with members of the Politburo not only professionally, but also confidentially.

relationship.

Considering all the circumstances, Abakumov was not eager to expand the scope of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee to the level of a world conspiracy. He knew that such accusations would certainly cause tension at the top, especially Voroshilov and Molotov, who were married to Jewish women, and Kaganovich, who was himself a Jew. The caution shown by Abakumov played a fatal role in his fate.

Energetic Ryumin, meanwhile, was appointed head of the Investigative Unit for Particularly Important Cases, and then Deputy Minister of State Security for investigative work. This freed his hands to manipulate materials against Abakumov in order to

having eliminated him, to freely promote the case of the "conspiracy of doctors" and the leading employees of the MGB participating in it - Jews by nationality.

The Ryumin investigators demanded that Abakumov name the members of his cabinet of ministers, which he allegedly intended to create after the overthrow of Stalin. He was also accused of hiding the treacherous plans of Molotov's wife, Polina Zhemchuzhina, in particular her contacts with the Israeli politician Golda Meyer.

Abakumov vehemently denied his guilt, arguing that he did not hide any materials about the "conspiracy of doctors" and, moreover, was not its leader or inspirer and did not involve subordinate Jewish employees from the Ministry of State Security in the "conspiracy". He continued to completely deny the charges against him, even under torture, and they never got a "confession" from him. Thus, the "conspiracy" case at the Ministry of State Security depended on the confessions of Colonel Shvartsman, a journalist by profession. While working in the Investigative Unit, he, as a rule, did not interrogate himself, but mainly edited falsified testimonies torn from prisoners. When Stalin ordered the arrest of the head of the Investigation Department, Leonov, and his deputies, Shvartsman, a Jew by nationality, was one of those arrested. He testified that he was Abakumov's assistant in the Zionist terrorist organization, which included all the top officers of the MGB. During interrogation, he "confessed" that he allegedly received from Abakumov an order to create a group of Jewish conspirators in the Ministry of State Security to develop terrorist actions against members of the government.

Schwartzman also "confessed" that, being a homosexual, he had an intimate relationship with Abakumov, his son and the British ambassador to Moscow. According to him, he used his homosexual contacts with the American double agents Gavrilov and Lavrentiev in order to receive instructions and orders for the Jewish conspirators through these people embedded in the US Embassy.

Shvartsman knew well how the investigative machine worked, and in order to prove his cooperation, he brought one charge after another against Jewish officials. At the same time, he invented the most incredible stories, such as this: he was assisted in terrorist activities by the Zionist "soup", which his aunt cooked according to old recipes. He also told investigators that he slept with his stepdaughter and at the same time had a homosexual relationship with his son. He sought to be sent for a psychiatric examination - and such a proposal was made by the deputy military prosecutor, Colonel Uspensky. When the accusations made by Shvartsman against thirty employees of the Ministry of State Security of Jewish nationality involved in terrorism were reported to Stalin, he told Ignatiev and Ryumin: "You are both fools. This bastard is just wasting time. No expertise. Arrest the entire group immediately." (Ludwigov told me about this when we were both in prison.)

By order of Stalin, all Jews were arrested - responsible employees of the central apparatus of the Ministry of State Security. This is how Eitingon, Raikhman, the Deputy Ministers of State Security, Lieutenant General Pitovranov and Selivanovsky ended up behind bars. They also arrested retired colonel Maklyarsky, who by that time had become a very famous screenwriter, specializing in scenarios from the life of intelligence officers: Shvartsman mentioned him in his testimony. The son of the first head of the Soviet state Sverdlov, Colonel Andrei Sverdlov, was also thrown into prison.

Together with these people, their immediate subordinates, Russians by nationality, were also arrested. In the MGB and the Investigative Department, new faces from party bodies appeared. They, as a rule, were distinguished by complete incompetence. In the wake of the growing anti-Semitic campaign and hysteria, the leadership of the Investigative Unit for Particularly Important Cases of the MGB was strengthened in 1951-1953 by special decisions of the Central Committee of the CPSU Konyakhin and Mesyatsev. The latter had extensive experience during the war years as the head of the investigative department in the front-line bodies of the military counterintelligence SMERSH. In the 1960s and 1970s, he became chairman of the USSR State Radio and Television, then amba

Australia.

As Major General Kalugin wrote in his book, a dancer from an ensemble touring in Australia complained that she had been raped in a hotel room by the Soviet ambassador. The KGB checked her statement and immediately informed the Central Committee of the party about it. Months was recalled to the Soviet Union, expelled from the party and dismissed from the Foreign Ministry. Today he is still active and, as an extraordinary ambassador in resignation, he is on the board of the public organization "For the Purity of the Motherland".

When such people from the Central Committee as Konyakhin and Mesyatsev led the Investigative Unit, sometimes participating in interrogations, the retired colonel writer Ananin recalls, those under investigation were brutally beaten, placed in punishment cells with special cooling, almost constantly kept in handcuffs and shackles, and unwanted records of interrogations and rulings were destroyed.

Of all the arrested "conspirators in the MGB" only Abakumov, Eitingon, Pitovranov and Matusov pleaded not guilty to anything.

The Jewish doctors arrested by Ryumin, who were under investigation, were accused of carrying out the tasks of Abakumov. The crimes attributed to the members of the Doctors' Plot seemed incredible to me. One of these "terrorists", Professor Alexander Feldman, treated our entire family, enjoyed our full confidence, and I always congratulated him on the holidays and sent him flowers.

According to Ryumin's scenario, Eitingon's sister Sonya, who allegedly maintained contact between medical scientists and her brother, who was planning the assassination of the country's leaders, was supposed to play the role of a liaison between the doctors and the "conspirators in the MGB".

The arrests were not publicly reported, and I did not immediately realize the extent of this purge in the MGB. I sensed the seriousness of the threat when I attempted to contact Colonel Shubnyakov, deputy head of the Main Counterintelligence Directorate. The attempt was unsuccessful, although at that moment I urgently needed a certificate-check for one important agent. Only he could give the information that I needed, and Shubnyakov seemed to have sunk into the water. Meanwhile, no one wanted to clearly explain where he had gone, although due to my official position (head of the Special Bureau for Intelligence and Subversion) and rank (lieutenant general), I had the right to do so. Outraged, I called Pitovranov, the head of the counterintelligence service, but it turned out that it was impossible to contact him either: he mysteriously disappeared. Then it dawned on me that the same thing that happened during the period of mass arrests in the pre-war years was being repeated. Both Shubnyakov and Pitovranov were already in Lefortovo prison by that time.

In 1951, when Abakumov was arrested, I got a call from Ryumin, who had just been appointed head of the Investigative Department of the MGB. He stated that he had in his possession serious incriminating material on Eitingon and his sister. Eitingon at that moment was on a three-month business trip in Lithuania. I asked that these materials be brought to me: I wanted to see them personally. An hour later, Ryumin appeared with a skinny dossier. There was no evidence against Eitingon, but against Sonya there were excerpts from undercover reports that she refused medical assistance to the Russians, and treated and advised only Jews. I told Ryumin that this did not convince me at all and Eitingon, in my eyes, still remains a reliable and trustworthy responsible officer of the security agencies. Rumin replied:

- But the Central Committee found these data quite convincing. - And right there, snatching the folder from my hands, he left with an angry look.

The situation in the Ministry of State Security was confusing and highly uncertain. Minister Abakumov was under arrest in Matrosskaya Tishina. However, his place remained vacant - no successor was appointed. When I called Deputy Minister Ogoltsov to discuss with him the situation with Eitingon's sister, he replied:

- This is a political matter, and it can be considered only in the Central Committee.

According to him, until a new minister is appointed, he will not sign no papers or give any orders.

After the conversation with Ogoltsov, there was only one thing left for me: to call Ignatiev, the then secretary of the Central Committee of the party, who oversaw the work of the MGB-MVD. He was a member of the Central Committee commission created by Stalin to reorganize the ministry after Abakumov's arrest. I have already been called to one meeting, and, I confess, I criticized the leadership of the ministry for mistakes in conducting intelligence and counterintelligence operations abroad, as well as in Western Ukraine and Central Asia. Ignatiev then said that he was ready, if necessary, to discuss this or that urgent issue with me. When I called him, he seemed happy to accept me at the Central Committee in Staraya Square.

When I met him, I said that I was troubled by attempts to slander Eitingon and his sister by attributing nationalist views to them. Ignatiev summoned Ryumin to his office with materials on Eitingon and his sister. In my presence, Ryumin, opening a folder, began to read extremely incomprehensible testimonies against Eitingon and his sister, in which it was alleged that they both showed hostility towards the Soviet state. This time, intelligence reports that Sonya refused to treat the Russians were not even mentioned.

As members of the Party, we are obliged," I said, "to evaluate people not by rumors, but by their deeds. Here is the work of Eitingon: the organizer of the action to eliminate Trotsky in Mexico, the creator of a successfully operating intelligence network abroad, and finally, he is one of the key figures in providing our country with secret information about atomic weapons.

Rumin was silent. Ignatiev interrupted me:

"Let's leave Eitingon and his family alone.

After meeting with Ignatiev, my heart was relieved: I thought that with Eitingon and nothing bad will happen to his sister.

About a month later, Ignatiev was appointed Minister of State Security. And in October 1951, it was on his direct instructions that Eitingon was arrested when he returned to Moscow from Lithuania, where he managed to neutralize the leadership of an anti-Soviet underground organization. His stepdaughter Zoya Zarubina told me that Eitingon was arrested in front of her at Vnukovo airport.

Eitingon's arrest put an end to Zoya Zarubina's service in our intelligence agencies. She successfully worked with materials on atomic weapons, at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, but was forced to leave the bodies after his arrest. Her excellent knowledge of English helped her to become one of the leading teachers of the Institute of Foreign Languages, and later she supervised the training of translators for the United Nations. 3. Zarubina is still an excellent lecturer, public figure, participant in many international conferences.

A few days after Eitingon's arrest, I had the opportunity to meet with Ignatiev at a meeting of the leadership of the ministry. Taking me aside, he reproachfully said:

"You were wrong about Eitingon. What do you think of him now?

I still remember my answer:

- My assessment is based on the concrete results of people's work and on the party line.

Here I must dwell a little on my illusions. I have always regarded the "doctors' case" and the "Zionist conspiracy" as pure fiction, spread by criminals like Ryumin, who then reported the "results" of the investigation to incompetent people like Ignatiev. Every time I met Ignatiev, I was amazed at how incompetent this person was. Each agent's message was perceived by him as the discovery of America. He could be convinced of anything: as soon as he read any document, he immediately fell under the influence of what he read, not trying to double-check the facts.

Ignatiev was completely unsuited for the work entrusted to him. Once, while holding a meeting on operational issues in his office in the morning, which was attended by more than ten people, he suddenly fell into a real hysteria because of a phone call from General Blokhin, head of the commandant's office of the MGB. I remember how he literally shouted into the phone:

"You are bound by the law. No one gave you the right to drag me into your affairs!

Hanging up the phone, he explained:

I can't stand these calls from Blokhin. Always asking me to sign death warrants. He says that there is an instruction for this. Why should I have anything to do with all this and sign these papers?! There is the Supreme Court, let Blokhin act according to the law.

No one answered. There was an awkward silence in the office.

Ignatiev easily started criminal cases against innocent people. Later I realized that he did not act on his own initiative, but carried out orders received from above from Stalin, Malenkov and others.

When TASS announced that well-known doctors and medical scientists in the country were accused of organizing a Zionist plot to kill Stalin and everything Politburo through improper treatment, I considered it a provocation, a continuation of an earlier anti-Semitic campaign. When materials with accusations against Eitingon came to me, I learned that he had allegedly trained conspiring doctors to carry out terrorist actions against Stalin and members of the Soviet government. In this regard, the indictment stated, Eitingon kept mines in his office, explosive devices disguised as ordinary electrical appliances. Meanwhile, everyone knew very well that these were samples of operational equipment, which was constantly at our disposal.

In those days, Moscow was literally flooded with rumors, one worse than the other: Jewish doctors and pharmacists were trying to poison ordinary Soviet people. There was also talk of possible pogroms. I was overcome with anxiety when the children—they were ten and twelve at the time—returned from school and told us about these rumors. My wife and I found ourselves in a very difficult position: it was extremely risky for the children of high-ranking state security officials to speak out against brazen anti-Semitic statements, since any dispute would simply draw attention to them and their parents. This would certainly have become known "at the top" - the party organs, which controlled all spheres of public life. Our children went to school together with the children of Malenkov and Kaganovich, which meant that the school was under constant surveillance. Our children could not even afford to say that Lenin and Stalin were always against manifestations of anti-Semitism, since such a statement would immediately be interpreted in a completely different spirit and distorted beyond recognition.

My wife and I advised our sons to say that they need to be especially vigilant, that rumors that are a provocation should not be spread. At that time we all had to adhere to the official version in the presentation of events, which was given by the Pravda newspaper, and there was not even a hint of pogroms in it. And spreading rumors is playing with fire, especially dangerous because it plays into the hands of the enemies of the people. Another thing is the feeling of indignation towards traitors and specific terrorists, we taught our children. I wonder how they would say this at a pioneer meeting, I thought. Shortly after this conversation, the director of the school called and thanked for the excellent upbringing of children. According to him, he was in a rather difficult situation: after all, many Jewish children studied at the school. The director told his wife: Your children's speech at the Pioneer meeting that the spread of rumors was a provocation caused a roar of approval and defuse the tense atmosphere.

Gradually, the campaign that was inflated around the "Zionist conspiracy" began to clearly get out of the control of its organizers. Ryumin and Ignatiev supported the accusations

Minister of State Security of Georgia Rukhadze to Beria that he hid his Jewish origin and secretly prepared a conspiracy against Stalin in Georgia. It was clear that Beria was the first on Stalin's list for destruction. By August 1952, the so-called "Crimean case" that had dragged on since 1948 ended - all the arrested members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, except for Lina Stern, and the former Deputy Foreign Minister Lozovsky were shot. In my opinion, Kheifets was kept alive only so that he could testify against Beria and Molotov when the time came to charge them with establishing links with the circles of international Zionism, under whose dictation the proposal to create a Jewish republic in the Crimea was initiated.

My opinion is based on reading the materials of the Abakumov case, which I met in the military prosecutor's office forty years after the events described, and Kirill Stolyarov's book "Golgotha", dedicated to the circumstances of Abakumov's death. I always believed that Ryumin was investigating the "doctors' case" until Stalin's death. But Stalin turned out to be far-sighted enough to understand: the conspiracy, as Ryumin painted it, was too primitive and one could hardly believe in it. Ryumin gave only a bare outline of the "conspiracy", but could not fill it with convincing details that would allow this fiction to look plausible. On November 12, 1952, Stalin ordered Ryumin to be dismissed from the MGB as having failed in his duties and seconded to the reserve of the Party Central Committee. Ryumin byt was appointed to the modest position of an accountant, which he held before starting work in the authorities. And before that, Ryumin worked as an accountant in the Arkhangelsk consumer cooperation.

Thus, since January 1953, when the TASS report about the "conspiracy of doctors" was published, the Minister of State Security Ignatiev, his first deputy Goglidze, the deputy for personnel Epishev, the heads of the Investigation Department Konyakhin, Grishaev, were responsible for the lawlessness and crimes that were taking place in the MGB investigative apparatus. Months and others. Those who came to leading work in the state security organs during this especially terrible period by decision of the Central Committee - Ignatiev, Epishev, Mesyatsev - not only were not held accountable, but, on the contrary, in the 50-70s received high appointments to responsible party and Soviet work. Goglidze was made a scapegoat as an accomplice of Beria and an illiterate pathological anti-Semite Ryumin.

At the end of February 1953, a few days before Stalin's death, I noticed a growing uncertainty in Ignatiev's behavior. My intuition told me that the entire anti-Semitic campaign was about to bog down, and its organizers would become unwanted witnesses and be arrested. And indeed, after the death of Stalin, Beria accused Ignatiev of deceiving the party and sought to bring him to criminal responsibility, but did not receive support from the Presidium of the Central Committee.

Another important detail of this case: among those interrogated by MGB investigators in the case of the so-called "Zionist conspiracy", was Mairanovsky, head of the toxicological laboratory of the Ministry of State Security ("Laboratory-X"). In 1951, he was arrested - he was immediately made a key figure in the "Zionist conspiracy" in the MGB, since he knew all the accused academic doctors and worked closely with them. Later, they wanted to make him a member of the "conspiracy of doctors".

According to Ryumin, Mairanovsky acted in accordance with the instructions of Eitingon - in order to eliminate all the top leadership of the country. Ryumin did not realize what shaky ground he was stepping on, because in his top-secret work Mairanovsky carried out the orders of Stalin himself. During interrogations, the head of "Laboratory-X" confessed to everything that was asked of him. True, Ignatiev soon felt that Ryumin had gone too far, and decided to separate Mairanovsky from the case of the "conspiracy of doctors."

Stalin's death put an end to the "doctors' cause", but anti-Semitism continued remain a formidable force.

The Doctors' Plot seriously undermined the prestige of doctors in society and caused a wave of distrust towards people in this profession. After the phony conspiracy was exposed, rival groups in the scientific medical community found themselves in a difficult position. My friend Professor Muzichenko, the rector of the Moscow Regional Scientific Institute of Clinical Research (MONIKI), told me that influential people in the government are always involved in one way or another in the medical dispute, since it is on them that the allocations for scientific research depend. The "doctors' cause" has taught officials to avoid any professional disputes, since it is never possible to predict which of the conflicting parties will receive support at the top, and which will be a political loser and even the intervention of security agencies will be required. This created an unfavorable atmosphere for scientific disputes and delayed the adoption of government decisions on appropriations for health care. Fears still persist that conflicts over medical and other professional issues may end up in an investigation at the Lubyanka.

Now they say that on the eve of Stalin's death there was a plan for the deportation of Jews from Moscow. I myself have never heard of it, but if such a plan really existed, then references to it could easily be found in the archives of the state security agencies and the Moscow Committee of the Party, because in its scope it certainly required a lot of preliminary preparation. An expulsion operation is a rather difficult matter, especially if it is prepared secretly. In this case, there must have been some kind of directive approved by the government at least a month before the start of such an action. So I think it's just a rumor, maybe

based on the statements of Stalin or Malenkov, who clarified the attitude of society towards Jews in connection with the "case of doctors".

Despite the atmosphere of anti-Semitism that arose under Stalin and continued under Khrushchev, the so-called selective approach to the Jewish intelligentsia was observed, according to which individual small groups of creative intelligentsia and highly qualified professional specialists were allowed to occupy a prominent position in society. The "Zionist conspiracy" and the elimination of Beria put an end to the admission of Jews to responsible positions in the intelligence service and the Central Committee of the party. As far as I know, in the KGB in 1960-1970, there were two ordinary Jewish operatives who were used against Zionist organizations.

From the point of view of Soviet thinking, the intention to create a Jewish republic with support from abroad was seen as gross interference in our internal affairs. Foreign participation is unheard of in our closed society.

When at one time I probed Harriman's attitude towards the creation of a Jewish republic, I followed the instructions received from Beria. I knew that such probing often leads to no results, and is just a common intelligence gathering practice. At that time, I could not even imagine that the mere fact of participating in such a discussion could threaten me with a death sentence.

The tragedy was that in a closed society, which was the Soviet Union, the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 was perceived as an undesirable existence for the Jews, as it were, of a second homeland. This was especially evident after Israel defeated the Arabs during the War of Independence in 1948. The pride of the Israelis for the victory in this war led to a revival within our country of a craving for national Jewish culture, which was actually destroyed in the 1920s and 1930s. Jews and Germans, who had a historical homeland abroad and therefore potential support, were not allowed to create their own republics within the Union. Discrimination against such ethnic groups was particularly severe. This can also be seen in the example of the fate of the Meskhetian Turks, who were deported from the Caucasus to Uzbekistan.

machinations, always characteristic of him, turned into a free hand for those leaders who harbored hatred for the Jewish population in their souls. For Stalin, anti-Semitism was a tool to achieve the goal, but in the hands of his subordinates, it became the principle of state personnel policy. Support for anti-Semitism by the top leadership of the country ultimately deprived the state of capable people who accepted the revolution and worked to create the Soviet state. When hard times came and the USSR collapsed, a significant part of the creative and scientific intelligentsia, enterprising people found themselves outside Russia, emigrating to Israel and the West.

THE LAST YEARS OF STALIN'S RULE

In 1946, Stalin appointed Abakumov Minister of State Security, and this changed the balance of power in his entourage. At that time, he carefully concealed his true goals, and we thought that the new appointments at the top of the Kremlin (Zhdanov was transferred from Leningrad to Moscow, Kuznetsov was brought into the secretariat of the Central Committee, Rodionov became the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation) were just ordinary insignificant rearrangements. But it wasn't. Stalin once again brought new people into the leadership to emphasize his superiority over rival factions in the Kremlin. In 1946-

In 1948, Zhdanov had the second voice after Stalin in making party and government decisions.

Two episodes shed new light on the struggle for power. The first is the case of concealing the facts of the production of low-quality products in the aircraft industry; the second, connected with the first, is the resignation of Marshal Zhukov and other heroes of the war. It all started with the accusation of Air Chief Marshal Novikov and People's Commissar of the Aviation Industry Shakhurin of concealing defects on aircraft, which caused plane crashes.

Abakumov, as head of military counterintelligence in 1945, reported letters from pilots complaining about the poor quality of aircraft. When he was appointed Minister of State Security, he initiated a criminal case against the leaders of the aviation industry and Novikov, the commander-in-chief of the Air Force, on Stalin's instructions, for allegedly concealing these problems. The question was very sensitive. Stalin was furious when his son Vasily, an Air Force general, and Abakumov reported that senior aviation industry officials deliberately covered up equipment defects in order to win prizes and awards. Malenkov, in his position in the Politburo, was responsible for industry and received a gold medal and the title of Hero of Socialist Labor for his outstanding work in organizing the production of military products.

The investigation showed that the number of air crashes with tragic consequences was distorted. Basically, all these cases were attributed to the mistakes of the pilots, and not to the shortcomings of the equipment. Before the war, failures were severely punished. When Valery Chkalov - a pilot who made a non-stop flight over the North Pole to America - died in a plane crash in 1938, the employee responsible for Chkalov's safety was arrested and shot for negligence, which led to the death of a national hero.

When Stalin, at a meeting of the highest officials of the MGB in July 1946, asked Abakumov: "The guilt of Novikov and Shakhurin has been proven. What measure of punishment do you propose?", he immediately replied: "Shooting."

It's easy to shoot; harder to get it to work. We have to make them work, - Stalin suddenly said.

Novikov and Shakhurin were arrested, and Stalin demanded confessions from them in order to expose the military leadership. Their confessions were filed in the files of Marshal Zhukov and other generals and posed a serious threat to Malenkov. Stalin used these confessions to remove Marshal Zhukov from the post of his deputy and Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces in 1946. In an order dated June 9, 1946, signed by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Zhukov was accused of "lack of

modesty", "excessive personal ambition" and "attributing to himself a decisive role in the execution of all major combat operations during the war, including those in which he played no role at all." Zhukov was demoted and appointed commander of the Odessa Military District. The order also stated that "Marshal Zhukov, feeling embittered, decided to gather around him the losers, the commanders who were relieved of their posts, thus becoming in opposition to the government and the High Command."

These accusations were based on the confessions of Marshal Novikov, who, under duress, was forced to testify against Zhukov. In a letter to Stalin, he spoke about Zhukov's ambitions and said that he had "anti-Stalinist conversations" with him, and also showed that he helped him hide that he was from the family of a royal policeman.

The removal of Zhukov had far-reaching consequences. This was the beginning of a campaign to debunk a number of military leaders who were heroes of the Great Patriotic War. So Stalin wanted to get rid of potential enemies. Soon, Admiral Kuznetsov, commander of the Navy, was removed, and as a result of the reshuffle, Bulganin became the Minister of the Armed Forces. He was unable to cope with the serious problems of mobilization and changes in the structure of the armed forces. I ran into him several times in the Kremlin during meetings of the heads of intelligence services. His incompetence was simply amazing. Bulganin did not understand such issues as the rapid deployment of forces and means, the state of combat readiness, and strategic planning. He did not understand that sabotage of the rear storage facilities was much more important than a direct attack on airfields. Discussing these plans, Bulganin argued with me and General Zakharov, the head of the intelligence department of the General Staff, arguing that instead of explosions in Innsbruck, in Austria - in areas where American fuel depots are located - it would be much more effective to blow up American planes directly on airfields in Germany and France. He said that this would undermine American morale and the Americans would not be able to use their bases in Europe.

Bulganin by all means tried to avoid responsibility for decision-making. Letters demanding an immediate response went unsigned for months. The entire secretariat of the Council of Ministers was horrified by this style of work, especially when Stalin, having gone to the Caucasus on vacation, entrusted Bulganin with the duties of Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Beria personally turned to Stalin with a request to expedite the passage of documents on the atomic bomb that were in Bulganin's secretariat through Bulganin. Stalin allowed his deputies to sign the most important decrees, bypassing Bulganin. So in the Council of Ministers there was a precedent for the creation of bureaus in various areas of government work.

Bulganin's appearance was deceiving. Unlike Khrushchev or Beria, Bulganin, always beautifully dressed, had a noble appearance. Later I learned that he was an alcoholic and greatly appreciated the ballerinas and singers from the Bolshoi Theater. This man did not have the slightest political principles - an obedient slave of any leader. Stalin, for his loyalty, appointed him First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Khrushchev for the same made him Chairman of the Council of Ministers to replace Malenkov. Later, in 1957, when Bulganin, together with Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and Voroshilov, tried to remove Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich, at a meeting of the party activists, brought an original accusation against him. "He was a Stalinist informer. For this, Stalin made him Marshal of the Soviet Union," Khrushchev said. "Of course, after we uncovered his anti-Party treacherous behavior, we will strip him of his rank and demote him." (This was told to me by my former deputy, Colonel Studnikov, who was present at that meeting.)

In March 1958, Bulganin was appointed chairman of the board of the State Bank, then, three months later, he was sent to work in the Stavropol Economic Council, in the region where the then unknown Mikhail Gorbachev began his career. Bulganin in the end

retired, and I met him in the center of Moscow in the early 70s in line for watermelons.

By appointing Bulganin as Minister of the Armed Forces, whom the military did not respect, Stalin achieved his goal and became the arbiter of the fate of both real commanders - such as Vasilevsky, Zhukov, Shtemenko, Konev, Rokossovsky and Bagramyan - and Bulganin himself. Bulganin would never have taken responsibility for any serious decision, even within his competence, although no one could do anything without his resolution. Thus, none of the parties - neither the true leaders, nor the puffed up figure - could act independently of each other. This encouraged hostility and rivalry between the military.

Abakumov arrested generals close to Zhukov in Germany on charges that at first seemed non-political: embezzlement of funds and removal (for himself) of valuables, furniture, paintings and jewelry from Germany and Austria. From the recently published archival materials, it is clear that these people were beaten out of testimony about Zhukov's anti-Stalinist statements. In 1944, during the war, Stalin ordered that Bogdan Kobulov, Bernie's deputy, install listening devices in Zhukov's Moscow apartment. Listening to the apartments of Zhukov and Admiral Kuznetsov did not give the results that were so hoped for. However, some well-known marshals and generals were imprisoned, and some of them were shot for anti-Stalinist statements recorded by eavesdropping devices, or in connection with the testimony that was knocked out of them by Abakumov's people.

Zhukov and Kuznetsov, retaining their dignity, openly admitted their mistakes; Zhukov "repented" that he awarded the famous singer Ruslanova with the Order of the Red Star. Although during the war he had such a right, in peacetime only the Supreme Council could award.

Marshal Kulik and General Rybalchenko were shot in 1950. The rest were in prison; they were released after Stalin's death. Novikov and Admiral Kuznetsov were reinstated in 1951-1953, and after Stalin's death, all charges were dropped from them. Zhukov remained in the post of commander of the military district, in 1952 Stalin introduced him to the Central Committee. Only after March 1953 was he recalled back to Moscow and appointed First Deputy Minister of Defense.

Zhukov, of course, was hostile to the entire apparatus of the Ministry of State Security. He didn't care who gave orders to follow him - Beria, Abakumov or Bogdan Kobulov; they all climbed into his personal life. The bugging of Zhukov's apartment was discontinued in 1953, after Stalin's death, but resumed by Khrushchev in 1957, and Brezhnev continued bugging until Zhukov's death in 1974. Even in retirement, Zhukov remained a potential threat to Khrushchev and Brezhnev, a military hero who could lead the military opposition if he were nominated by the military.

Viktor Abakumov was born in 1908. He served as Minister of State Security from 1946 to 1951. He was a tall man with a mop of dark hair and a strong, strong-willed face. Despite the fact that he had no education, thanks to his innate intelligence and firmness of character, he climbed to the very top. His work in the Cheka began with the technical support of operations, he did not deal with agents and was engaged in safe houses, cars. Later, during the purge of the 1930s, he made a name for himself under Bogdan Kobulov, Beria's deputy. Shortly before the war, Abakumov was promoted: he became deputy people's commissar of internal affairs. When Mikheev, head of military counterintelligence, shot himself while surrounded by Kiev, Stalin replaced him with Abakumov, then only thirty-four years old. In his new position, Abakumov was responsible for the political reliability of the troops and the fight against German espionage in the armed forces; at the same time, he gained experience in intelligence and counterintelligence matters. He could not be compared with Beria in terms of professional abilities, but his business acumen greatly distinguished him from the rest of the apparatchiks.

In December 1945, Beria was relieved of the post of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, which he had held since 1938. He no longer supervised the security agencies,

if it did not directly concern his main work: he led the Special Committee on Problem No. 1 - the atomic bomb and the fuel and energy complex.

When Abakumov was appointed Minister of State Security instead of Merkulov in 1946, he was not close to Beria. On the contrary, Stalin instructed Abakumov to collect dirt on everyone in whose hands was power, including Beria. Abakumov was able to prove that Malenkov was well aware of the concealment of problems in the aircraft industry, and in 1947 Malenkov was reprimanded, removed from his post and temporarily exiled to Kazakhstan. He was removed from the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and his duties passed to Kuznetsov, Zhdanov's protégé. Abakumov and Kuznetsov established the closest friendly relations.

However, two months later, Stalin appointed Malenkov Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Beria at that time supported Malenkov and did not hide the fact that they often met. Abakumov, for his part, informed Stalin that Malenkov and Beria sympathized with the repressed leaders of the aviation industry and the military. Abakumov got acquainted with police documents about Beria's guards, who grabbed women on the street and brought them to Beria, which caused complaints from husbands and parents.

The alignment of forces in Stalin's entourage was as follows: both Beria and Malenkov maintained close working relations with Pervukhin and Saburov, who dealt with economic issues. They were all part of the same group. They promoted their people to positions of power in government. The second group, later called the Leningrad group, included Voznesensky, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and head of the State Planning Commission; Zhdanov, second secretary of the Central Committee of the party, Kuznetsov, secretary of the Central Committee, who was in charge of personnel, including those of state security agencies; Rodionov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, Kosygin, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers for light industry and finance, nominated during the preparation and implementation of the monetary reform (in 1948 he was Minister of Finance), and after the "Leningrad affair" transferred to a low-prestigious job in the Ministry light industry. The second group appointed its people to the posts of secretaries of district party organizations. Kuznetsov in 1945 nominated Popov, the former director of the aircraft factory, as secretary of the Moscow Party Organization, and Popov became a member of the Orgburo of the Central Committee and secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks at the same time. Zhdanov encouraged his attempts to control the ministers through elections to the Moscow Party Committee. Zhdanov and Kuznetsov exercised double control over members of the government: through Popov and through the Central Committee (Yeltsin tried to do something similar when he became secretary of the Moscow Party Committee. This is one of the reasons f

Thus, members of the government could be manipulated without the intervention of Beria, Malenkov and Pervukhin. When Zhdanov died in 1948, Popov demanded that the ministers, as party members, report to him as head of the Moscow Party Committee. Malenkov, seeking to remove Popov, interpreted his demand as evidence of a "conspiracy" and the emergence of an "independent" center of power in the Moscow Party organization. Malenkov's opinion was supported by the ministers, who complained to Stalin that Popov constantly interfered in their work. Khrushchev attended weekly meetings of the Politburo in Moscow and in those years was close to the group of Beria and Malenkov.

Stalin encouraged this rivalry; he knew that his power would not suffer. In addition, Stalin was aware that the struggle for power within his old guard gave him the opportunity to get rid of them all at the first opportunity. He could always replace them with young party workers from the field who had no experience of intrigue at the top.

During this struggle for power, Stalin and Zhdanov launched an "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign to reinforce the country's isolation and drive out any outside ideological influences from the intelligentsia. Another goal of Stalin was to strengthen the position of the USSR in Eastern Europe and establish there basically the same regime that existed in the Soviet Union.

At the same time, Israel's victory in the War of Independence strengthened the Soviet Jews consciousness of their own cultural community.

It was this campaign that allowed Stalin to get rid of the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, who had long irritated him. They insisted on fulfilling the promises made during the war, which were known abroad. Their much needed during the war connections with influential people in the West were reason enough for Stalin to decide to destroy them. An important role was played by the anti-Semitic views of the party leader.

A year after Churchill delivered his famous speech at Fulton in 1946 and the Cold War began, a cold snap immediately followed in all aspects of Soviet intellectual life, so-called scientific discussions arose in biology, literary criticism and linguistics, philosophy, political economy. Both Kremlin groups used this campaign to their own advantage, trying to find ideological sins in their opponents. It was not just a confrontation between Jews (cosmopolitans) and orthodox communists; the essence of the campaign, rather, was a radical shuffling of personnel in scientific and creative circles in the interests of the ruling elite.

Everyone knows the "case of biologists": the disputes on genetics that arose in the 30s quickly moved from the field of science to the field of politics. On one side were world-famous biologists who justified the need to fund further research in genetics. They were opposed by a group of careerists in science, headed by Trofim Lysenko, who speculated on Marxist ideology. He presented the government with a picture of an uninterrupted food supply based on the achievements of Marxist biology, promised a new era of abundance in ten years, openly fought against geneticists, claiming that they were putting bundles in the wheels of progress.

His promises turned out to be a bluff. A new debate began, articles in scientific journals criticized Lysenko and his followers. Outstanding scientists wrote to the Central Committee, revealing the serious mistakes of the Kremlin biologist

Zhdanov nominated his son Yuri, who at one time was married to Stalin's daughter Svetlana, to the post of head of the Department of Science of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Yuri Zhdanov supported Lysenko's critics. In this case, Abakumov's information was used from scientific biological circles, obtained from trustworthy sources: Academician Lysenko is trying to deceive the government, unfoundedly reporting on his achievements in agrobiolgy, which are actually absent. In their letters, scientists said that Lysenko's reign in agrobiolgy since the 1930s and his rejection of any research on genetics were detrimental to scientific progress.

Ludvigov, head of Beria's secretariat in the Council of Ministers, told me how Zhdanov used this situation to increase his influence in scientific circles. He was not a supporter of the freedom of scientific activity, he was not interested in the actual scientific issues - he was rather worried about the expansion of his influence. The speeches of scientists against Lysenko helped him appoint his people to posts that control science and industry.

After Zhdanov's death, the official line in science again began to lean towards Lysenko's support and rejection of genetics. Unfortunately, published works on the fate of genetics in the 1940s hardly mention that the sudden changes in the official attitude towards genetic scientists coincided with and were largely caused by cardinal changes in the party leadership responsible for science.

In the late 40s, I became friends with Anna Tsukanova, deputy head Department of leading party bodies, that is, in essence, Deputy Malenkov.

I knew that my wife had a friend, Anna, but I didn't meet her until one day they invited me to dinner at the Ararat restaurant in the center of Moscow. When I arrived for dinner, met Anna and learned her full name, I realized that this was Malenkov's deputy. To me

I immediately liked her pleasant appearance and the long dark braid laid at the back of her head - a real Russian beauty. This was the beginning of our long friendship. Anna and I spoke like a colleague who knew each other's responsibilities; both of us had access to classified material, so we could discuss our work freely. And now, more than forty years later, we remain friends.

Anna often said that the line of Comrade Stalin and his colleague Malenkov was to constantly move high-ranking party leaders and state security officials, not allowing them to stay in the same place for more than three years in a row, so as not to get used to power.

Anna's words made a strong impression on me that the Central Committee does not always take action on facts of bribery, "looseness", etc. according to the reports of the Commission of Party Control and Security Agencies. Stalin and Malenkov preferred not to punish betrayed high-ranking officials. If they were ranked as rivals, then this compromising evidence was immediately used for their dismissal or repression.

Anna revealed to me that the leadership knew about the costs of almost every major ideological campaign, but the goal, as Malenkov said, justified these costs. It is now obvious that the terrible price paid for ideological campaigns and purges was a criminal mistake by the then rulers and undermined the entire system.

Anna did not suspect that she had opened my eyes to the real state of affairs at the top by saying that the Central Committee knew that the campaign against the cosmopolitans was overblown and exaggerated. True, she was sure that over time these errors would be corrected.

It was from her that I learned that Stalin himself had decided to purge the Georgian party organization. She said that everyone in the Central Committee was afraid to propose any changes in the personnel of the leadership of the Georgian Communist Party, since the issue affected Stalin's personal connections and this could hurt him. Anna and I thought that this was how Stalin reacted to the bribery in Georgia. Now we know from archival documents that the so-called "Mingrelian case", one of the last purges, was organized by Stalin himself.

In the last years of Stalin's rule, Malenkov, Bulganin, Khrushchev and Beria were included in a small circle of leaders, and Stalin did his best to incite rivalry among them. In 1951, Beria fell out of favor. Stalin ordered the installation of listening devices in Beria's mother's apartment, deciding that neither Beria nor his wife would allow any anti-Stalinist remarks, but his mother, Marta, lived in Georgia and could well express sympathy for the persecuted Mingrelian nationalists. Beria was a Mingrelian, and the Mingrelians did not get along with the Gurians, whom Stalin trusted most of all. The Mingrelian case is essentially based on trumped-up charges of conspiracy to secede from the Soviet Union. Stalin started this business, wanting to get rid of Beria. He demanded that Beria destroy his most loyal comrades. Pretending that he still trusted Beria, Stalin granted him the rare honor of addressing party and state activists at the celebration of the thirty-fourth anniversary of the October Revolution on November 6, 1951.

In 1948, four years before the Georgian purge, Stalin appointed General Rukhadze as Georgian Minister of State Security. During the war, he headed the military counterintelligence in the Caucasus. His anti-Beria sentiments were well known. On the personal orders of Stalin, Rukhadze, with the help of Ryumin, who was notorious, collected dirt on Beria and his entourage. At first, there was just daily surveillance of Beria's Georgian relatives. Beria did not conceal from either Stalin or Molotov that his wife's uncle, Gegechkori, was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Menshevik government of Georgia in Paris; did not hide the fact that his nephew collaborated with the Germans, being a prisoner during the war.

In the late 1930s, and then after the war, Soviet intelligence dealt with Georgian emigrants in France. The most successful in this regard was the work of the NKVD officer Vardo Maksimalishvili, Beria's former secretary.

At that time, there were rumors in government circles that Beria's son Sergei was going to marry Svetlana Alliluyeva after her divorce from Zhdanov's son. Beria's secretary, Ludvigov, who told me this story in the Vladimir prison, said that Nina, Beria's wife, and Beria himself were strongly opposed to this marriage. Beria knew that his opponents from the Politburo would use this marriage in the struggle for power, that Stalin's forces were no longer the same, and if Beria connected himself with Stalin by family ties, then in the event of Stalin's death, he would be doomed. The situation gave rise to their mutual dislike, and from this point of view it is possible to explain why in 1951 Stalin ordered General Rukhadze to continue the investigation into the bribery of Mingrelian Georgian officials. It should be noted that in Georgia there was a very significant layer of Mingrelians in the security agencies and in leadership work.

Stalin ordered Rukhadze to find evidence and look for evidence of foreign connections of the Mingrelians of Georgia, then he could sum up: "These Mingrelians cannot be trusted at all. I don't want to be surrounded by people with dubious connections abroad." This was enough to make Rukhadze realize that he must fabricate a conspiracy. As the writer Stolyarov, who is working on the book *The Praetorians*, told me, shortly after this meeting, Rukhadze attended a dinner party where, after drinking heavily, he boasted that he was close to Stalin and that he gave him instructions on carrying out sabotage and kidnappings in Turkey and France. The dinner was also attended by Georgian Interior Minister Bziava, a Mingrelian, who the next day wrote a letter to the newly appointed Minister of State Security, Ignatiev, in Moscow, reporting on Rukhadze's behavior at the dinner. Ignatiev reported this to Stalin. Stalin is ordered to show this letter to Rukhadze and to destroy the letter in his presence. Ignatiev warned Rukhadze that, although he still enjoys the favor of Stalin, "you must not allow yourself to be dismissed."

Rukhadze's next step was the arrest of the former Minister of State Security of Georgia Rapava, Prosecutor General Shonia and Academician Sharia, a member of the mandate commission of the Council of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, who for some time worked as deputy head of foreign intelligence of the NKVD. All of them were accused of having links with emigrant organizations through the NKVD agent Gigelia, who returned from Paris with his French wife in 1947. Gigelia and his wife, despite her French nationality, were arrested on the orders of Stalin, they were tortured to force them to act according to a preconceived scenario.

Thus began the purge of the Georgian leadership, those who were close to Beria. An anti-bribery campaign in Georgia escalated into allegations of a conspiracy to secede the Mingrelians from the Soviet Union. Stalin did this out of personal dislike for Beria and in order to deprive Beria of the foundations of his influence in Georgia.

Stalin launched this campaign in 1951, shortly after Beria's notable rise in popularity in connection with his successful work on the atomic problem and the second test explosion of the atomic bomb. The "boss" knew that this was a special achievement, because the nuclear device did not copy the American designs of the atomic bomb, but instead of encouraging the success of his protégé, Stalin wanted a person more dependent on him to do this business now.

The Politburo invited Beria to head a party commission investigating the case of the "Mingrelian deviators," sending him to Tbilisi to expose "Mingrelian nationalism" and dismiss his closest associate, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, Charkviani, who, on Stalin's orders, was replaced by Beria's longtime enemy Mgeladze. Beria, in addition, had to close the Mingrelian newspapers.

At the moment when Beria was addressing the participants of the ceremonial meeting about the celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin sent a group of investigators to Tbilisi to the arrested Mingrelians in order to obtain confessions that would discredit Beria and his wife Nina. The Mingrelians confessed nothing. They spent a year and a half in prison, they were not allowed to sleep, they were tortured, and Beria released them only after Stalin's death. Eight months before his death, Stalin arrested Rukhadze, who became

him as an unwanted witness. Officially, he was accused of deceiving the party and the government.

Now Kirill Stolyarov clarified for me the situation in which I found myself in Georgia in 1951 (or 1952), when Ignatiev ordered me to leave for Tbilisi. I had to evaluate the capabilities of the local Georgian intelligence service and help them prepare the kidnapping of the leaders of the Georgian Mensheviks in Paris, relatives of Beria's wife, Nina Gegechkori. I had to report personally to Ignatiev. I was informed that the initiative to carry out this operation came from Tbilisi, from General Rukhadze, and Stalin personally approved it.

Rukhadze insisted that Georgian agents take over this operation. With this idea, he arrived in Moscow and went to an appointment with Ignatiev. Departing back to Tbilisi, he invited me to fly with him. I preferred to travel by train.

What I saw in Tbilisi shocked me deeply. The only able and well-connected agent in France, Gigelia, was imprisoned on charges of espionage and Mingrelian nationalism. Rukhadze's agents could not be trusted; they even refused to speak Russian to me. Deputy Rukhadze, who planned to go to Paris, had never been abroad. He was sure that if he brought the Georgian emigrants a barbecue and a basket of Georgian wine, arranged a feast in the most famous restaurant in Paris, he would win their favor. It was also proposed to send a delegation of cultural figures to Paris, but everyone understood that these grandiose plans masked Rukhadze's desire to send his wife to Paris. She was a modest woman and a good singer, but she could only represent the Tbilisi Conservatory in the delegation. She had no idea about her husband's plans.

Meanwhile, a group of investigators from Moscow dealing with the Mingrelian case happily informed Rukhadze that they had almost established a connection between the Beria family and the arrested nationalists. Then, in Rukhadze's office, I noticed under the glass on the table a portrait of young Beria, one of his sworn enemies. Rukhadze became an ally of Abakumov, who back in 1946 tried to compromise first Beria's former subordinates in the intelligence service, and then himself.

Rukhadze's amateur adventurism frightened me, and I hurried back to Moscow to report everything to Ignatiev. He and his first deputy Ogoltsov listened attentively to me, but noticed that it was not for us, but for the "instances" to judge this case, since Rukhadze personally corresponded with Stalin in Georgian. Stalin, ODSH1 KO, understood that Rukhadze and Ryumin were becoming dangerous: instead of simply obtaining confessions of treason, during the investigation they showed great interest in intrigues in the party and government elite. Abakumov wrote from prison to Beria and Malenkov on October 11, 1952, that Ryumin was interested in internal relations in the Politburo, using information from top secret reports sent by the MGB to Stalin.

Stalin decided to sacrifice Ryumin and Rukhadze. Rukhadze was soon imprisoned in Lefortovo; Ryumin was removed from the post of Deputy Minister of State Security and dismissed from the authorities in November 1952. After Stalin's death, he was arrested, but even if Stalin were alive, he would still have destroyed him.

After Stalin's death, Beria did not release Rukhadze from prison, but Rukhadze's victims were released. Rukhadze and Ryumin, both under arrest, bombarded Beria with letters asking for release, addressing him as a "Great Man." Three months later, when Khrushchev and Malenkov arrested Beria, these letters implicated them in a conspiracy supposedly orchestrated by Beria. Thus, Rukhadze was shot in Tbilisi in 1955, along with his former victims, who were again arrested for their connection with Beria.

Hidden motives and ambitions in the late 40s and early 50s played a much more important role in political events than it seemed at that time and seems to be now. We (those who saw all this and suffered from it as a result) later came to the conclusion that the party

the elite (Stalin and those who followed him) used campaigns against cosmopolitanism and the consequences of the personality cult only to get their opponents and opponents out of the way. Their goal was to achieve absolute power or introduce new figures into their environment. They expected that the Party Control Committee and the security agencies would constantly supply them with compromising materials. The general rule was to collect incriminating facts against everyone, and, if necessary, use this information. I was both a tool and a victim of this system.

Abakumov reported compromising material personally to Stalin, and on the basis of this information, Stalin could blackmail the entire elite. After Zhdanov's death, the delicate balance of power was upset. Stalin did not allow Zhdanov to finally get rid of Malenkov when he became involved in a scandalous story with the aviation industry; instead, he simply demoted him, but kept him a powerful member of the Politburo. Stalin forced Malenkov to "supervise" the correction of errors in the aviation industry, knowing that Malenkov would go out of his way, fearing further revelations. Thus, he remained in his place as a counterbalance to Zhdanov, whose followers soon paid dearly.

From Anna Tsukanova, I learned amazing facts about the "Leningrad case", during which all the people of Zhdanov and the rivals of Malenkov and Beria were convicted and shot. In 1949 we were unaware of the horrendous accusations against them. At that time, Anna only told me that Kuznetsov and Voznesensky were relieved of their posts because they were involved in falsifying the results of the party elections at the Leningrad City Party Conference. Kuznetsov's friendship with Abakumov did not save him; Stalin tested Abakumov's sincerity by forcing him to destroy his friend.

We must remember what is often overlooked: the mentality of the idealistic communists in the late 40s and early 50s. For us, the most terrible crime of a high-ranking party or statesman was treason, but the falsification of party elections was no less a crime. The cause of the party was sacred, and in particular intra-party elections by secret ballot, which were considered the most effective instrument of intra-party democracy. Therefore, when Anna told me that the party leaders of Leningrad falsified the election results at the party conference, these people ceased to exist for me.

The specific details of the "Leningrad case" remained a secret for the party activists; even Anna had no idea of the gravity of the accusations. Now we know that they were accused of trying to split the Communist Party by organizing an opposition center in Leningrad. One of the convicts, Kapustin, was accused of espionage, but no evidence was presented.

All this was fabricated and caused by the ongoing struggle among Stalin's assistants. The motives that forced Malenkov, Beria and Khrushchev to destroy the Leningrad group were clear: to strengthen their power. They were afraid that the young Leningrad team would replace Stalin. Now we know that the results of the counting of votes during the secret ballot in Leningrad in 1948 were indeed falsified, but the convicts had nothing to do with it. The Politburo in full force, including Stalin, Malenkov, Khrushchev and Beria, unanimously adopted a decision obliging Abakumov to arrest and try the Leningrad group, but, no matter what they wrote in school textbooks on the history of the party and no matter what Khrushchev wrote in his memoirs, the initiator of the case was not Abakumov. Indeed, his subordinates under his leadership fabricated this case, but Abakumov acted in accordance with the order received.

At first, all those arrested were charged with crimes of moderate gravity. For example, Voznesensky - in the loss of documents from the secretariat and in nepotism: his younger brother and sister held responsible positions in Moscow and Leningrad. Mikoyan was also indirectly affected: one of his sons married Kuznetsov's daughter.

The "Leningrad affair" remained a secret even after Stalin's death, and even I, although I was

head of the independent service of the MGB, did not know about the fate of those who died in obscurity.

The head of the Leningrad MGB, General Kubatkin, was repressed and shot after a closed trial. Now the documents of the "Leningrad case" have been partially published. The hands of all who were members of the Politburo at that time are covered in blood, because they signed the death warrant for the defendants three weeks before the start of the trial in Leningrad.

The "Leningrad Affair" also coincided with the sharp debunking of Molotov, who, although he remained a member of the Politburo, was removed from his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs in March 1949. Vyshinsky replaced him. Molotov took the arrest of his wife, Polina Zhemchuzhina, a Jewess, very hard; at first she was accused of abuse of power and the loss of secret documents (which could have been stolen at the direction of Stalin). On Stalin's orders, under coercion by investigators, in order to compromise Zhemchuzhina in the eyes of her husband and the Politburo, two of her subordinates were forced to slander her and admit that they had an intimate relationship with her. She spent a year in prison, and then she was sent to Kazakhstan. Stalin hoped to get dirt on Molotov from Zhemchuzhina. Her arrest was kept secret, and I only found out about it just before Stalin's death, when Fitin, who at that time was the Minister of State Security of Kazakhstan, complained to me how difficult it was to personally answer for Zhemchuzhina. Ignatiev asked about her all the time, trying to find out about her connections with the Zionists and the Israeli ambassador to the USSR, Golda Meyer. In January or February 1953, Fitin was summoned by Goglidze, the First Deputy Minister of State Security, and ordered that Zhemchuzhina be transferred to the Lubyanka. Fitin realized that the main purpose of all this was to accuse Molotov of links with the Zionists, and became worried that changes in leadership might affect those who worked with Molotov, including him.

At that time, in late 1952-early 1953, we did not know that Stalin openly opposed Molotov and Mikoyan at the Central Committee Plenum. Stalin declared them conspirators. He accused Molotov of having succumbed to blackmail and pressure from imperialist circles, implying that Zhemchuzhina (although her name was not mentioned) had to do with the Zionist conspiracy and secret connections with Golda Meyer.

Immediately after the plenum, Molotov was required to return to Stalin's secretariat the original documents on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which included secret protocols. From that day until they were published in 1992, they were kept in the secret archives of the Politburo. I do not exclude the possibility that Stalin was going to charge Molotov with pro-German sympathies or fawning over Hitler during these secret negotiations.

In September 1950, Drozdov, Deputy Minister of State Security of Ukraine, was transferred to Moscow. We have known each other for almost thirty years. My wife was friends with his wife. Arriving in Lviv to find the leader of the underground OUN, Shukhevych, I lived with Drozdov in a dacha not far from the city. In Moscow, Drozdov was put in charge of Special Bureau No. 2 of the USSR Ministry of State Security, which was supposed to be engaged in secret surveillance and kidnapping of Stalin's enemies inside the country - both real, as I now understand, and fictional.

At first, Abakumov and Ogoltsov decided that my sabotage and intelligence bureau would be involved in such operations, both in the country and abroad, and Drozdov would be my deputy, since Eitingon had fallen out of favor. This did not suit Abakumov, he organized the work in such a way that Drozdov was entrusted with internal operations. Drozdov had no connections in Moscow, but he was entrusted with these delicate matters. His first task was to check the reliability of the eavesdropping system and make sure that our "bugs" were not detected. It was then that I learned from Drozdov that in 1942 Stalin ordered Bogdan Kobulov, Beria's deputy, to install listening equipment in the apartments of Marshals Voroshilov, Budyonny and Zhukov. Later, in 1950, the names of Molotov and Mikoyan were added to this list. There were grandiose plans to secretly eavesdrop on all telephone conversations in the leadership of the Central Committee, but this was carried out only during the Brezhnev era, when the technology reached the required level.

Drozdov was glad that he was not involved in any kidnappings ordered by Stalin, but his subordinates twice had to work for the Main Counterintelligence Directorate: they had to talk on the street with foreign diplomats who met with Russian writers and start brawls. The first thing Beria did when he became interior minister after Stalin's death was to fire Drozdov because he knew too much about internal intrigues and because he was on bad terms with Bogdan Kobulov. The dismissal of Drozdov at the age of fifty was simply a salvation for him, although it seemed then a collapse: otherwise he would have been arrested along with Beria.

In July 1951 Abakumov was arrested. In his last year as minister, especially in the last nine months, he was absolutely isolated from Stalin. The Kremlin list of visitors shows that after November 1950, Stalin did not receive Abakumov. Stalin believed that Abakumov knew too much. For me, his collapse was like a bolt from the blue.

In May or June 1951, the last time I spent a few hours in Abakumov's office, he looked very self-confident and made decisions without hesitation. Only later did I learn from my cellmate Mamulov that in the last months of 1950 Abakumov tried to get closer to him, because he knew that he had direct access to Beria. Mamulov said that Abakumov asked him to arrange for Beria to receive him, and claimed that he was always loyal and never participated in intrigues against him.

Abakumov was accused of dragging out the investigation of important crimes and concealing the information that Gavrilov and Lavrentyev (homosexuals who were introduced into the American embassy) were double agents of the CIA and the MGB.

Of course, Abakumov had fabricated confessions and false testimony given under torture on his conscience, but it is also true that first the prosecutor's office, and then Ryumin, accused him of crimes that he did not commit. He was never a politician and could not organize a conspiracy to seize power; he was absolutely devoted to Stalin and believed in him.

At first I did not understand the circumstances of the collapse of Abakumov; he and I often held opposite points of view, and it seemed to me that the leadership of the party wanted to correct serious mistakes in the work of the MGB. The Politburo commission, which included Beria, Malenkov, Ignatiev, and Shkiriyatov (head of the Party Control Commission), from the very beginning seemed interested in testing the effectiveness of intelligence and counterintelligence operations. It soon became clear, however, that Abakumov's arrest was the beginning of a new purge. As a result, Malenkov's position strengthened, as Stalin appointed his former secretary, later head of the department of leading party and Soviet bodies of the Central Committee, Ignatiev, to the post of Minister of State Security. In the absence of both Abakumov and the Leningrad group, Malenkov and Ignatiev, in alliance with Khrushchev, formed a new center of power in the leadership.

After meeting with Ignatiev and his new first deputy Goglidze, I returned to my office dejected. Their ideas about our active operations abroad differed from mine. They planned to begin the liquidation of the heads of emigrant groups in Germany and Paris in order to report these high-profile cases to Stalin. They did not care that it is much more profitable for us to influence the activities of emigration. They were going to use two agents, a married couple, to deal with the retired general Kapustiansky, a Ukrainian nationalist who received this rank from the tsar himself. He was over seventy, he had retired from politics and was not dangerous to us, but Ignatiev wanted to report on his liquidation as soon as possible in order to impress the government. I was categorically against it and persuaded Ignatiev and his deputy Epishev not to do this, since the death of Kapustiansky would deprive us of access to his mail, which was our most important source of regular information about the situation in exile.

I remember that Ignatiev and Epishev signed a directive for our foreign residencies to intensify the penetration of agents into the Menshevik organizations, which allegedly belonged to

number of our main opponents. This was in 1952, thirty-five years after 1917. I stated bluntly that our residency in Vienna was only concerned with American military installations in Europe and had neither the time nor the men to hunt down the Mensheviks. Ignatiev, despite the fact that both his deputies Ryasnoy and Epishev supported him, said: "The directive is good, but you are right. Let's call it back."

My wife and I were worried about the frequent arrests among MGB workers. Both in the anti-Semitic campaign and in the intra-government intrigues, growing tension was noticeable. My wife felt that she and I were following the testimonies of those who had been arrested—Raikhman, Eitingon, Matusov, Sverdlov. When Anna came to visit us, for the first time in my life I spoke with my wife about the prospects and the possibility of finding another job. Being the head of a service under an incompetent minister with deputies like Ryumin, adventurers and careerists, I was bound to find myself in a difficult position. I had just graduated from the military academy, and this gave me hope for a new job in the military or party sphere. Anna agreed to help me...

In 1952, Stalin did not go, as usual, on vacation to the Caucasus. It seems that then Malenkov called us and said that the Central Committee entrusted me with an important task, the details of which Ignatiev will dedicate to me. Soon I was invited to his office, where, oddly enough, he was alone. Having greeted each other, Ignatiev said: "At the top, they are very concerned about the possibility of forming an "Anti-Bolshevik bloc of peoples" headed by Kerensky. This initiative of American reaction must be resolutely suppressed and the top of the bloc beheaded. I was ordered to prepare without delay a plan of action in Paris and London, where Kerensky was supposed to visit.

A week later, however, I reported to Ignatiev that difficulties had arisen in the preparation of the operation, since our man in Paris, Khokhlov, who could find approaches to Kerensky, fell into the field of view of enemy counterintelligence. The last time he crossed the border, the Austrian police became interested in his documents, and his fake passport was seized for verification.

Our illegal battle group in Paris was led by Prince Gagarin, whose task was to find approaches to the NATO headquarters in Fontainebleau to destroy communications and alarm systems in the event of an escalation of the situation or the outbreak of hostilities. The existence of this combat group was reported on various occasions to both Stalin and Malenkov. I asked Ignatiev if we should redirect these agents to the liquidation of Kerensky.

Ignatiev, who never took risks, said that this should be decided at the top. A day or two later, I read a TASS report that the Ukrainian nationalists and Croatian émigrés had not agreed to the creation of an "Anti-Bolshevik Bloc" chaired by Kerensky—they did not want a Russian at the head of this organization.

The next morning, I sent a report to Ignatiev on the work of the battle group, attaching information from TASS so that he would understand that Kerensky no longer posed a threat to the Soviet Union. Ignatiev called me, Ryasny and Savchenko into the office. He began with reproaches that they proposed the liquidation of Kerensky without understanding the internal strife in the anti-communist groups. Ignatiev emphasized that Comrade Malenkov was especially concerned that we should not deviate from the main action, the struggle against the main enemy, the United States.

After the meeting, Ignatiev suggested that we prepare proposals for the reorganization of intelligence work abroad. This reorganization was personally led by Stalin. On his initiative, at the end of 1952, the Main Intelligence Directorate was created in the MGB, which later became the famous 1st Main Directorate of the KGB of the USSR. The head of intelligence took the position of deputy minister, which meant an increase in costs and an increase in the prestige of conducting intelligence operations abroad.

I was not invited to the Kremlin for a meeting on this issue, which was chaired by Stalin, but Malenkov officially announced at a meeting in the MGB about the decision, which he described as a plan to create a "powerful intelligence

agent network abroad. Malenkov at the same time quoted Stalin: "Work against our main enemy is impossible without the creation of a powerful intelligence and sabotage apparatus abroad. It is not necessary to establish residencies directly in the US, but we must act decisively against the Americans, primarily in Europe and the Middle East. We must use the new opportunities that have opened up for us in connection with the intensification of Chinese emigration to the United States. America's vulnerability lies in the multiethnic structure of its population. We must look for new opportunities to use national minorities in America. No non-Native American who works for us should be forced to work against the country of origin. We must make the most of the immigrants from Germany, Italy and France in the United States, convince them that, in helping us, they are working for their homeland, humiliated by American domination.

The year 1953 began, and I was greatly concerned about the personnel changes in the MGB at the initiative of Stalin. I knew that my name was on a list of 213 people, which included the names of leading officials of the highest rank, who were repressed in connection with the "Leningrad case", the case of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the "conspiracy of doctors". Using these materials, Malenkov dismissed or even removed many employees from Moscow, starting a serious personnel reshuffle in the highest party and government structures. He wanted to attract new people to the apparatus who would be new to the mechanisms of power in Moscow and would carry out any order without the slightest hesitation.

This purge soon became bloody. Lieutenant General Vlasik, head of the Kremlin guard, was sent to Siberia to the post of head of the camp and secretly arrested there. Vlasik was charged with concealing the famous letter of L. Timashuk, which Ryumin used to start the "doctors' case", "with suspicious links with foreign intelligence agents and a secret collusion with Abakumov."

After the arrest, Vlasik was mercilessly beaten and tortured. His desperate letters to Stalin about his innocence went unanswered. Vlasik was forced to admit that he abused his power, that he allowed suspicious people to attend official receptions in the Kremlin, Red Square and the Bolshoi Theater, where Stalin and members of the Politburo were, who, thus, could be exposed to terrorist attacks. Vlasik remained imprisoned until 1955, when he was convicted now for embezzling funds for the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, and then amnestied. Despite the support of Marshal Zhukov, his requests for rehabilitation were

rejected.

The dismissal of Vlasik did not mean at all that Beria could now change people in Stalin's personal guard. In 1952, after the arrest of Vlasik, Ignatiev personally headed the Kremlin Security Directorate, combining this position with the post of Minister of State Security.

All the gossip that Beria's people killed Stalin is unfounded. Without the knowledge of Ignatiev and Malenkov, no one from Stalin's circle could get access to Stalin. He was an old, sick man with progressive paranoia, but until his last day he remained an all-powerful ruler. He openly announced his desire to retire twice, the first time after the victory celebrations in the Kremlin in 1945 and again at the Plenum of the Central Committee in October 1952, but these were just ploys to reveal the alignment of forces in his circle and inflame rivalry within the Politburo.

In January 1953, Malenkov and Ignatiev ordered me to prepare proposals on how to use the feedback of our adviser in China, who reported to Stalin about the directive of the Chinese leadership to recruit agents from among the Soviet specialists working there. Comrade Stalin, according to Malenkov, decided to send a copy of this message to Mao Zedong, announcing that we were recalling our adviser because we had full confidence in the Chinese leadership. Kovalev, in my opinion, that's his last name, was immediately appointed Stalin's assistant in the apparatus of the Council of Ministers. Malenkov ordered me to consult

with Kovalev about the creation of a new intelligence network in the Far East in order to receive reliable information about China. At the same time, he emphasized that this network should not have links with old sources that may have been known to the Chinese since the time of the Comintern. The

atmosphere was tense. At the end of February 1953, I was summoned to Ignatiev's office, where Goglidze, his first deputy, and Konyakhin, deputy head of the investigation unit, were staying. Ignatiev said that we were going to the "instance". It was a late hour - Ignatiev, Goglidze and Konyakhin entered Stalin's office, and I remained in the waiting room for about an hour. Then Goglidze and Konyakhin left, and they asked me to come in.

I was very excited when I entered the office, but as soon as I looked at Stalin, this feeling disappeared. What I saw amazed me. I saw a tired old man. Stalin has changed a lot. His hair had thinned a lot, and although he had always spoken slowly, he now clearly pronounced the words as if through force, and the pauses between words became longer. Apparently, the rumors about two strokes were true: he suffered one after the Yalta Conference, and the other on the eve of his seventieth birthday, in 1949.

Stalin began by discussing the planned reorganization of foreign intelligence. Ignatiev asked if there was a need to leave two independent intelligence centers in the Ministry of State Security: the Bureau of Subversion Abroad and the Main Intelligence Directorate. I was asked to speak. I explained that in order to carry out operations against US strategic bases and NATO bases surrounding our borders, we must constantly cooperate with the intelligence of the MGB and the Ministry of Defense. The rapid deployment of forces to carry out special tasks, such as sabotage, requires cooperation.

I emphasized that the success of our sabotage operations against the Germans depended to a large extent on the quality of the intelligence network spread in the immediate vicinity of the bases to be destroyed, adding that we were ready, in accordance with the directive of the Central Committee, to blow up the American fuel depots in Innsbruck, in Austria. We didn't just send a task force there. Our agents had direct access to the facilities, but Abakumov's unexpected order to cancel an operation that would have severely hindered American air travel to Berlin baffled us.

Stalin did not answer. There was an awkward pause for several minutes. Then he said: "The Bureau of Subversion Abroad should be kept as an independent apparatus with direct subordination to the minister. It will be an important tool in the event of war to cause serious damage to the enemy at the very beginning of hostilities. Sudoplatov should also be made deputy head of the Main Intelligence Directorate, so that he is aware of all our intelligence capabilities, in order to use all this for sabotage purposes.

Stalin asked me if I knew Mironov, Epishev's assistant, deputy minister of the MGB for personnel, and suggested that Mironov head the Main Intelligence Directorate of the MGB. I replied that I had met with Mironov only once, when, by order of the minister, I told him about the main tasks of the bureau.

There was another awkward pause. Stalin handed me a handwritten document and asked me to comment on it. It was a plan to assassinate Marshal Tito. I had never seen this document before, but Ignatiev explained that the initiative came from Rzasny and Savchenko, the deputy ministers of state security, and that Pitovranov was aware of this action.

Pitovranov stood out sharply for his intellect and outlook among the leadership of the MGB. During the war, he became head of the NKVD department in Gorky. Ryumin imprisoned him for a while on charges of the "Abakumov conspiracy," but he was released in 1952. He was friends with my deputy Eitingon, but was compelled, under orders, to arrange for his arrest in October 1951. Two days later, he himself ended up in Lefortovo and sat in a cell opposite Eitingon. Later I heard that Pitovranov wrote a letter from prison addressed to Stalin, where he accused Ryumin of provocative disruption of the plans of active operations of our counterintelligence. He was released, he returned to his former

place, having been treated for a month in Arkhangelsk, in a military sanatorium for higher command.

I told Stalin that the document proposed naive methods for eliminating Tito, which reflected a dangerous incompetence in the preparation of the plan. The letter to Stalin read:

"The Ministry of State Security of the USSR asks for permission to prepare and organize a terrorist attack against Tito, using an illegal agent "Max" - comrade. Grigulevich I.R., citizen of the USSR, member of the CPSU since 1950 (certificate attached).

"Max" was transferred by us on a Costa Rican passport to Italy, where he managed to gain confidence and enter the circle of diplomats of South American countries and prominent Costa Rican figures and businessmen who visited Italy.

Using his connections, "Max", on our instructions, achieved an appointment to the post of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Costa Rica in Italy and at the same time in Yugoslavia. Fulfilling his diplomatic duties, he visited Yugoslavia twice in the second half of 1952, where he was well received, had access to circles close to the Tito clique, and obtained a promise of a personal audience with Guito. The position currently occupied by "Max" allows him to use his capabilities to carry out active operations against Tito.

At the beginning of February of this year. "Max" was summoned by us to Vienna, where a meeting was organized with him under secret conditions. During the discussion of the capabilities of "Max", he was asked how he could be most useful, given his position. "Max" proposed that some effective measure be taken personally against Tito.

In connection with this proposal, a conversation was held with him about how he imagines it, as a result of which the following possible options for carrying out a terrorist attack against Tito were revealed.

Instruct "Max" to obtain a personal audience with Tito, during which he will have to release a dose of pneumonic plague bacteria from a silently operating mechanism disguised in clothes, which guarantees the infection and death of Tito and those present in the room. "Max" himself will not know about the substance of the drug being used. In order to save his life, "Max" will be vaccinated with anti-plague serum beforehand.

In connection with the expected trip of Tito to London, to send "Max" there, using his official position and good personal relations with the Yugoslav ambassador to England, Wellsbit, to get to a reception at the Yugoslav embassy, which Velebit would be expected to give in honor of Tito.

The act of terrorism is carried out by a silent shot from a disguised as an object personal use of the mechanism with the simultaneous release of tear gases to create panic among those present, in order to create an environment conducive to the departure of "Max" and cover up the traces.

Take advantage of one of the official receptions in Belgrade, to which the wives of the diplomatic corps are invited. The act of terrorism is carried out in the same way as in the second version, entrusting it to "Max" himself, who, as a diplomat accredited to the Yugoslav government, will be invited to such a reception.

In addition, instruct "Max" to develop a variant and prepare the conditions for the presentation through one of the Costa Rican representatives of Tito's gift in the form of some kind of jewelry in a box, the opening of which will activate a mechanism that ejects an instantaneous poisonous substance.

"Max" was asked to think again and make suggestions on how he could carry out the most effective measures against Tito. Methods of communication are stipulated with him and it is agreed that additional instructions will be given to him.

We would consider it expedient to use the capabilities of "Max" to carry out a terrorist attack against Tito. "Max" for his personal qualities and experience in intelligence suitable for this task.

We ask for your consent."

Stalin did not make any notes on the document. The letter was not signed. In Stalin's office, looking into his eyes, I said that "Max" was not suitable for such an assignment, since he had never been a terrorist fighter. He participated in the operation against Trotsky in Mexico, against the security agent in Lithuania, in the liquidation of the leader of the Trotskyists in Spain, A. Nin, but only with the task of ensuring the release of the militants to the object of the action. Moreover, it does not follow from the document that direct access to Tito is guaranteed. No matter how we think about Tito, we must treat him as a serious enemy who participated in military operations during the war years and, of course, retain his presence of mind and repel the attack. I referred to our agent "Val" - Momo Dzhurovich, a major general in the protection of Tito. According to his reports, Tito was always on the alert because of the tense internal situation in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, "Val", due to internal intrigues not so different from ours, lost Tito's favor and is currently in prison.

It would be wiser to use the differences in Tito's circle, I noted, feverishly thinking about how to bring into play Eitingon, who was under arrest, so that he would be responsible for the execution of the operation, since Grigulevich greatly appreciated him - they worked side by side abroad for five years.

Ignatiev did not like my remarks, but I suddenly felt confident, because the mention of a high-ranking source of information from Tito's security service impressed Stalin.

However, Stalin interrupted me and, turning to Ignatiev, said that this matter should be rethought, taking into account the internal "fights" in the leadership of Yugoslavia. Then he looked at me intently and said that, since this task was important for strengthening our positions in Eastern Europe and for our influence in the Balkans, it must be approached with the utmost responsibility in order to avoid a failure similar to that which took place in Turkey in 1942, when the assassination attempt on the German ambassador von Papen failed. All my hopes of raising the question of Eitingon's release vanished instantly.

The next day, the ministry gave me two letter files - "The Vulture" and "Nero", which contained compromising evidence on Tito. There were also weekly reports from our station in Belgrade. The dossier included Molotov's idiotic resolutions to look for Tito's connections with pro-fascist groups and Croatian nationalists. In the dossier, I did not find any real facts that make it possible to approach Tito's inner circle so that our agents can get close enough to strike.

When I was summoned the next day to Ignatiev's office, four of Khrushchev's people were there - Deputy Minister Serov, Savchenko, Rjasnoy and Epishev - and I immediately felt out of place, because before I had discussed such delicate issues only in private with Beria or Stalin. Among those present, I was the only intelligence professional who had experience working abroad. How could one tell the deputy ministers that their plan was naive? I couldn't believe my ears when Epishev delivered a fifteen-minute lecture on the political importance of the mission. Then Rjasnoy and Savchenko joined in, saying that Grigulevich was more suitable than anyone for such work, and with these words they showed his letter to his wife, in which he spoke of his intention to sacrifice himself in the name of the common cause of Grigulevich, apparently, being insured, forced to write this letter.

I realized that my warnings would not work, and said that, as a member of the Party, I consider it my duty to tell them and Comrade Stalin that we have no right to send an agent to certain death in peacetime. The plan of the operation must necessarily provide for the possibility of the militant leaving after the action; one cannot agree with the plan in which the agent was ordered to destroy a heavily guarded object without a preliminary analysis of the operational situation. In conclusion, Ignatiev stressed that we all need to think, think and think again about how to fulfill the directive of the party.

This meeting turned out to be my last business meeting with Ignatiev and Epishev. Ten days later, Ignatiev raised the operational staff and troops of the MGB on alarm and

confidentially informed the heads of departments and independent services about Stalin's illness. Two days later, Stalin died, and the idea of an assassination attempt on Tito was finally buried.

In the meantime, my attempts to go to work in the party bodies or the Council of Ministers seemed to be beginning to bear fruit. In 1952, I sent to the Central Committee information received from our residency in Vienna about American plans to kidnap the secretary of the Central Committee of the Austrian Communist Party. I was summoned to the Central Committee to Suslov to discuss these data. A few days later, in the first days of March 1953, I was told that my candidacy was being considered to fill the vacancy of deputy chairman of the newly formed foreign commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU on "illegal" relations with foreign communist parties. My wife and I were full of hope that maybe the end would come of my service in the security agencies, which were headed by absolutely incompetent people who committed crimes both out of incompetence and out of careerist motives.

But rapidly unfolding events radically changed my fate. On March 5, Stalin died, and on the same day, late in the evening, Beria was appointed minister of the expanded Ministry of the Interior, which now included both the police and the security apparatus (MGB). I was at Stalin's funeral and saw how unprofessionally Serov, Goglidze and Rjasnoy controlled the situation in the city. Before I could get to the Hall of Columns to stand guard for my ministry, a cordon of trucks blocked the way, so I had to make my way through the cabs of the trucks. They did not even think about how to accommodate all the delegations arriving for the funeral. There was some kind of idiotic confusion, due to which hundreds of grieving people, unfortunately, died in the stampede.

During Stalin's funeral, my grief was sincere; I thought that his cruelty and reprisals were mistakes committed because of the adventurism and incompetence of Yezhov, Abakumov, Ignatiev and their henchmen.

The next day after the funeral, I realized that another era had begun. Beria's secretary called me at six in the evening and said that the new Boss had left the office and ordered not to wait for his return. From that moment on, I could leave work every day at six in the evening, in contrast to those years when I had to work until two or three in the morning, while Stalin sat at his desk in the Kremlin or in his dacha.

A shake-up of personnel began in the new ministry; Kruglov, who had worked with Malenkov in the Central Committee in the 1930s and had been Minister of the Interior for the past seven years, became Beria's first deputy in the enlarged Ministry of the Interior. Goglidze, who unwittingly turned out to be involved in the "Mingrelian case", ceased to hold the post of deputy minister and headed the military counterintelligence. Bogdan Kobulov, Beria's protégé, whom Abakumov fired from the state security agencies in 1946, returned to Lubyanka as Beria's deputy. Serov, Khrushchev's man, retained his position and remained Beria's first deputy. Rjasnoy and Savchenko, who, like Serov, worked with Khrushchev in Ukraine, headed the Main Intelligence Directorate. Fedotov, always balanced and disciplined, who briefly replaced Fitin in the leadership of foreign intelligence in 1946, and later worked in the Information Committee, again, as before the war, headed the Main Counterintelligence Directorate. Beria appointed Lieutenant General Sazykin, my former deputy in the "atomic" intelligence department, head of the Directorate for Combating Ideological Subversion and Nationalism, the future 5th "political" department of the KGB.

Parallel to these quick appointments was the debunking of the accusers in the Zionist conspiracy and the Doctors' case. Eitingon, Raikhman, Selivanovsky, Belkin, Shubnyakov and other high-ranking officials arrested on charges of covering up a Zionist conspiracy or assisting Abakumov in plans to seize power were released at the end of March 1953. The Zhemchuzhina case was closed by Beria himself on March 23, but

she was released the day after Stalin's funeral, on the occasion of Molotov's birthday, March 9th. Beria ordered the cases of Eitingon and Reichmann to be reviewed and all the formalities necessary for their release to be quickly settled.

Later, Eitingon told me that he did not expect anything good when, after the death of Stalin, which he did not know about, he was called to the investigator. To his surprise, he saw Goglidze and Kobulov there, who had been fired from the authorities seven years ago. He knew immediately that a big change had taken place. He was asked only one question: will he continue his service after his release? He did not feel well, but after treatment he was ready to continue working.

Then Kobulov told Eitingon that Stalin was dead, and he, Kobulov, spoke on behalf of Beria, who had recently been appointed head of the expanded Ministry of the Interior, and he - his deputy for investigative work and counterintelligence. Kobulov promised that although the formalities would take several days, Eitingon could rest in peace in his cell while awaiting release. Eitingon asked to be transferred away from the investigative block so that he would not have to hear the screams of the prisoners, on whom Ryumin is trying "active methods of investigation." Kobulov replied that Ryumin himself was under arrest for the crimes committed, and Beria, having become a minister, with the very first order forbade beatings and torture of those under investigation at Lubyanka and Lefortovo.

Then Kobulov called for an escort, and an escort entered the investigation room to escort Eitingon to his cell. Showing off in front of Kobulov, the guard ordered Eitingon: "Hands behind your back!" - the usual treatment of prisoners. Kobulov immediately interrupted him and ordered that Eitingon be treated with due respect, as with a major general of state security, since he was no longer under investigation, but under administrative arrest. This finally convinced Eitingon that everything that was happening was not a game.

Beria ordered me and other generals to check the trumped-up charges of the Zionist conspiracy. What struck me most was that Zhemchuzhina, Molotov's wife, allegedly established secret contacts through Mikhoels and Jewish activists with her brother in the United States. Her letter to her brother, dated October 1944, had nothing to do with politics at all. As an intelligence officer, I immediately realized that the leadership allowed her to write this letter in order to establish a formal covert line of communication with the American Zionist organizations. I could not imagine that Zhemchuzhina could write such a letter without proper authorization.

I remembered my contacts with Harriman about the creation of a Jewish republic in the Crimea; From the testimony of Zhemchuzhina, I realized that the sounding of the American representatives on this issue was carried out not only through me, but also in other directions, in particular through Mikhoels. This convinced me that my communication with Harriman was only one of the few attempts to discuss how the Jewish question could be used in the broader context of Soviet-American relations.

When I began to discuss with Beria the role that Zhemchuzhina could play in renewing informal contacts with the international Jewish community, he cut me off, saying that this issue in intelligence operations was closed once and for all.

Instead, he pointed to Maisky, who he said was a much more important figure and an ideal candidate for sounding out our new initiatives in the West. He could make personal contacts at a high level in order to carry out our policy that has changed dramatically since Stalin's death. Academician Maisky, a former ambassador to London and deputy minister of foreign affairs, was already close to seventy at the time. Once he was one of the Menshevik leaders, opponents of Lenin, but later reached amazing heights in the Soviet diplomatic service. In 1952, he was also accused of a Zionist conspiracy. Absurd accusations were fabricated against him: it was alleged that Jewish organizations abroad wanted to appoint him as foreign minister in the new government after "Abakumov seized power."

Beria told me: "Since you knew Mayskoy during the war, even before Yalta, and your

wife has made friends with his wife, you must prepare to work with him in the future."

Fedotov, head of counterintelligence, who was "reviewing" the Maisky case, advised me not to meet with him for the time being. "Pavel Anatolyevich, from my first meeting with him, when I officially announced to him: "You are under the jurisdiction of the head of counterintelligence, General Fedotov, who is instructed to consider the absurd accusations leveled against you and the circumstances of your illegal arrest," he began to admit that was a Japanese spy, then an English one, and then an American one." Maisky, of course, tried to convince Fedotov of his guilt in order to avoid beatings and torture. He refused to believe that Stalin had died and was buried in the Mausoleum; he said it was another provocation. Fedotov suggested that I postpone all discussions on important diplomatic and intelligence issues for two or three weeks. On the orders of Beria, he transferred him from the cell to the rest room behind his office, where Mail and cue could see his wife and where he was shown documentary footage of Stalin's funeral

The three-week delay almost became fatal, because Maisky's case was not closed, unlike the others, in May 1953. When Beria was arrested, Maisky, treated badly by Malenkov and Molotov, was living in the Lubyanka with his wife, in a room behind Fedotov's office. Now Maisky was accused of conspiring with Beria to become foreign minister under him and was sent back to prison, where he suffered a nervous breakdown.

Later, my wife met his wife in Butyrok's waiting room, where both Maisky and I were sitting. Maiskaya said she was leading a fantastic life - although all of Maisky's money and all government bonds were confiscated, her personal bonds of the last five years remained with her, and one of them won 50,000 rubles on a government loan (then one ruble was equal to four American dollars) . When she met my wife in prison, where they both brought food parcels for their husbands, Maiskaya couldn't immediately remember where they met. "In Paris, in London, or at a reception in the Kremlin?" she asked. My wife smiled and reminded her that it was at Emelyan Yaroslavsky's dacha, not far from our dacha, and at Yaroslavsky's apartment in the center of Moscow.

After spending four years in prison, Maisky finally appeared before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court on charges of complicity with Beria to seize power and maintaining links between Beria and British intelligence. Maisky denied all accusations, and the Military Collegium could not find evidence of his guilt. Gorsky (NKVD resident in London at the time Maisky was ambassador there) was summoned to testify about Maisky's treacherous connection with Beria, but he changed his initial testimony and did not support the prosecution. The guilt of everyday life is reduced to exceeding the powers of the ambassador, since Maisky sent telegrams from London not only to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also to the NKVD of Beria - suddenly he was blamed for the standard requirements for sending out special messages from ambassadors. He was also accused of criminally admiring the Western way of life and cultivating Western manners in the Soviet embassy in London. Maisky was sentenced to ten years in prison, four and a half of which he had already served, and soon he was amnestied. He was rehabilitated only in 1964.

Academician Maisky published his memoirs without once mentioning misadventures and ill-fated acquaintance with the Soviet prison.

The case of the Zionist conspiracy in the security agencies was finally closed in mid-May 1953, when Andrei Sverdlov and Matusov, high-ranking officials of the MGB, were released. Beria appointed Sverdlov to the post of head of the department responsible for investigations and verification of anonymous letters. His colleague Matusov, from whose notes one can learn a very interesting chronology of the purges from 1930 to 1950, was released in 1953, but not reinstated. He died in the late 60s. My wife used his legal advice to support requests for my release. Matusov was soon expelled from the party and deprived of his MGB pension for his involvement in the repressions. Relying on the support of Sverdlov, he constantly appealed to the CPC under the Central Committee of the CPSU.

In 1963, Matusov and Sverdlov were summoned by Deputy Chairman of the Party Control Committee Serdyuk, Khrushchev's protégé, who demanded that they stop writing letters to the Central Committee, otherwise the party would punish them both for spreading gossip and over the body for illegally persecuting the famous writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Sverdlov and Matusov protested vehemently, claiming that they had not fabricated the case. Solzhenitsyn's letter, criticizing the Soviet system and Stalin personally for military failures, was intercepted during the war by military censorship, which began the case against Solzhenitsyn. In the conditions of the war, criticism of the military command was regarded at least as suspicious. Serdyuk interrupted them and said that, according to the evidence available to the Party Control Commission, Solzhenitsyn had always been a die-hard Leninist, and showed them the letter Solzhenitsyn had written to Khrushchev.

Sverdlov was reprimanded on the party line, but continued to work as a senior researcher at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU, where he was transferred after the arrest of Beria. Matusov was expelled from the party "forever". It was officially announced that this decision would never be reviewed, but he was left alone and allowed to pursue literary activities. Together with Sverdlov, he wrote a number of detective stories.

Abakumov was not released. Beria and Malenkov had a grudge against him. He was accused of falsifying the Zhemchuzhina case. At that time I was not interested in Abakumov, I had my own reasons not to like him, but I learned from Raikhman that Abakumov denied accusations linking him to the Zionist conspiracy, despite the fact that Ryumin brutally tortured him. Reichman told me that he behaved like a real man with a strong will. In 1990, I was called as a witness when his case was checked by the military prosecutor's office; I changed my mind about him, because whatever crimes he committed, he paid the price in prison. He had to endure incredible suffering (he spent three months in a refrigerator in shackles), but he found the strength not to submit to the executioners. He fought for his life, categorically denying the "conspiracy of doctors". Thanks to his firmness and courage in March and April 1953, it became possible to quickly release all those arrested, implicated in the so-called conspiracy, since it was Abakumov who was charged with being their leader.

However, Beria and Malenkov decided to put an end to Abakumov. At a meeting in his office, Beria officially announced that although Abakumov's allegations of conspiracy were unfounded, he still remained under investigation for squandering government funds, abuse of power and, more seriously, for falsifying a case against the former leadership of the Ministry of Aviation Industry, command Air Force, against Polina Zhemchuzhina, for the murder of Mikhoels.

As soon as Eitingon was released on March 23, 1953, he was immediately admitted to the hospital due to an ulcer and general exhaustion. He asked me to expedite the release of his sister Sonya, who was arrested with him in 1951 and sentenced to ten years in prison "for refusing to treat Russian patients and aiding the Zionist conspiracy." Sonya was initially sentenced to eight years, but prosecutor Daron, an ethnic Jew who oversaw the investigation at the MGB, fearing accusations of sympathy for Jews, insisted on a longer term. I took advantage of my next meeting with Beria to give him a letter from Eitingon, who asked for my sister. Fortunately for Sonya, Beria's first deputy Kruglov was also in Beria's office then. When I tried to explain what the matter was, Beria interrupted me, handed the letter to Kruglov without signing it, and said: "Organize her release immediately."

I followed Kruglov to his office, where he dictated a short presentation to the Supreme Court: "The verification of the charges against Sonya Isaakovna Eitingon undertaken by the Ministry of the Interior showed that the case was fabricated, and the evidence of her guilt was falsified. The Ministry of Internal Affairs enters the Supreme Court with a proposal to cancel the verdict, and the case against Eitingon S.I. terminate due to lack of composition

crimes." Signature: "S. Kruglov, First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR.

I saw to it that the letter was submitted to the Supreme Court and tried to expedite the formalities necessary for her release. The decision of the Supreme Court was signed only three weeks later, but it took another week for the administration of the camp where she was imprisoned to receive it. I personally called the head of the camp, asking for her speedy release, but he replied that she was in the hospital and she would be operated on. Using my position, I gave the order to immediately release Xie from the camp and transfer her to the local hospital as soon as the operation was done.

She was lucky that Kruglov, and not Beria, signed the letter of her release. A few weeks later, Beria was arrested, and his resolution in a letter would have kept her out of prison for at least two years, when other prisoners serving time on charges of Zionist conspiracy and agitation were also released. Sonino's case was one of the first in the wave of rehabilitation launched by Beria after Stalin's death.

Of course, it is clear that even this wave, which seemed to correct past mistakes, was caused by the ambitious plans of Beria.

The new Charter of the Communist Party was approved at the 19th Congress of the CPSU in 1952, before Stalin's death. According to this Charter, there was only one ruling body - the Presidium of the Central Committee, greatly expanded. The Politburo, which had only eleven members, was abolished. The new Presidium had twenty-five people, including the old guard - Molotov, Kaganovich and Voroshilov - and relatively young people like Brezhnev, Chssnokov and Suslov

However, the real power was concentrated in the Bureau of the Presidium, unknown to the general public, which was chosen at the last Plenum of the Central Committee, where Stalin presided, in October 1952. The Bureau included Stalin, Malenkov, Beria, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Saburov, Pervukhin. It did not include Molotov and Mikoyan, influential figures of the old guard, who by this time had been deprived of real power. The new Bureau was ruled by Stalin and the younger generation.

At the Plenum of the Central Committee on April 2, 1953, when not even a month had passed since Stalin's death, Beria made public the facts that Stalin and Ignatiev had abused their power by fabricating the "doctors' case".

Ignatiev was Malenkov's man. His removal after Stalin's death as secretary of the Central Committee, who oversaw the security agencies, suited Beria and Khrushchev, but did not suit Malenkov, who was losing his support in the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the party. For Malenkov, this was especially dangerous, since in April 1953 he retired from work in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU, having been relieved of his post as secretary of the Central Committee.

The materials of the April 1953 Plenum contain basically all the sensational accusations with which Khrushchev surprised the world in 1956 in his revealing report at the 20th Party Congress.

Without going into an assessment of the motives of Beria's initiatives in April-June 1953, one cannot help but admit that his proposals to eliminate the Gulag, release political prisoners, and normalize relations with Yugoslavia contained all the main measures to "eliminate the consequences of the personality cult" implemented by Khrushchev during the "thaw".

During the last years of Stalin's rule, Khrushchev used the alliance with Malenkov and Beria to increase his influence in the party and state. He won the rare honor of addressing the 19th Congress of the CPSU with a separate report on the Party Rules. Having defeated his rivals through intrigue, he placed his people in positions of influence. It is rarely noticed that Khrushchev managed in the last year of Stalin's rule to introduce four of his proteges into the leadership of the MGB - the Ministry of Internal Affairs: Serov, Savchenko, Rjasnoy and Epishev became deputy ministers. The first three worked with him in Ukraine. The fourth served under him as secretary of the regional committee in Odessa and Kharkov.

Immediately after the Plenum of the Central Committee in April 1953, Malenkov lost his leadership

position in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Thus, his position in the leadership now depended entirely on an alliance with Beria. He did not understand this and exaggerated his authority, still thinking, 'but he is the second person after Stalin in the party and the state and that everyone around him, including the Presidium of the Central Committee, is interested in good relations with him. However, after Stalin's death, the behavior of members of the Soviet leadership became more independent, and everyone wanted to play their own role. Thus, a new situation arose that opened the way for Khrushchev's ascent to the heights of power.

THE FALL OF BERIA AND MY ARREST

Within a day of Stalin's death, the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs were merged under the unified leadership of Beria. On March 10, 1953, four groups were created in the ministry to check and revise the falsified cases: the "conspiracy of doctors", the "Zionist conspiracy", the "Mingrelian case" and the "MGB case".

The message of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the press about the release of the arrested doctors was significantly different from the dismissal of the Central Committee of the CPSU. In this message, Beria used stronger language to condemn the illegal arrest of doctors. However, his proposals for the rehabilitation of the executed members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were rejected by Khrushchev and Malenkov. Members of the JAC were rehabilitated only in 1955. Beria's proposals for the rehabilitation of doctors and JAC members gave rise to false rumors about his Jewish origins and his connections with Jews. In early April 1953, Khrushchev sent a closed letter to party organizations demanding that they not comment on the message of the Ministry of Internal Affairs published in the press and not discuss the problem of anti-Semitism at party meetings.

On April 2, 1953, Beria sent a memorandum to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, in which he stated that Mikhoels was slandered and villainously killed on the orders of Stalin by a group of MGB workers, headed by Ogoltsov and Tsanova, which included five more operatives. He proposed to cancel the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on awarding these persons with orders, and to arrest Ogoltsov and Tsanova, as the perpetrators of the villainous action, on charges of murder. However, Tsanova was arrested only a year later, but not for participating in the murder of Mikhoels, but as a "member of Beria's gang." Ogoltsov and his group were deprived of their awards, but they were not put on trial. Ogoltsov was expelled from the party only in 1954. So, no one really paid for the murder of Mikhoels, except for the fact that several people had to return their orders.

By the way, Beria spoke at the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU and presented for discussion a draft of a broader amnesty for political prisoners. However, his proposals were not accepted. The decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on amnesty applied to all persons, including political prisoners, sentenced to up to five years. This decision turned out to be ill-conceived: over a million ordinary criminals - thieves, rapists, swindlers, hooligans - were simultaneously released from the camps. Cities and towns were literally **flooded** with punks and hooligans, the situation became dangerous and tense. In this regard, Beria transferred the apparatus of the ministry to work in an enhanced mode, ordered his deputies and heads of departments to ensure public order in the capital. The troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were sent to patrol Moscow and massive searches of attics and basements. Order was quickly restored. There is no doubt, however, that the rampant crime caused by the amnesty shook the prestige of Beria, which had risen after the release of the doctors. It is significant that Beria decided to transfer the Gulag from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Justice and raised the question of its liquidation. After the arrest of Beria, this decision was canceled.

In April 1953, I began to notice some changes in Beria's behavior: talking on the phone in my presence (and sometimes several other senior

officers of state security) with Malenkov, Bulganin and Khrushchev, he openly criticized the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the party, addressed them familiarly, on "you". Once, in the presence of Sazykin, head of the ideological counterintelligence department, he began to recall how he had saved Ilya Ehrenburg from Stalin's wrath. According to her, in 1939 he received an order from Stalin to arrest Ehrenburg as soon as he returned from France. At the Lubyanka, Beria was waiting for a telegram from the NKVD resident in Paris, Vasilevsky, in which he highly appreciated Ehrenburg's political contribution to the development of Soviet-French relations and his anti-fascist activities. Instead of following Stalin's order, Beria, at the next meeting with him, showed Vasilevsky's telegram. In response, Stalin muttered:

Well, if you love this Jew so much, work with him further.

One day, going into Beria's office, I heard him arguing on the phone with Khrushchev:

"Listen, you yourself asked me to find a way to eliminate Bandera, and now your Central Committee is preventing the appointment of competent workers, professionals in the fight against nationalism.

Beria's cheeky tone in dealing with Khrushchev puzzled me: after all, he had never allowed himself such liberties when his subordinates were nearby.

In May 1953, Grigulevich was recalled to Moscow. This was done for two reasons: it was necessary to make sure that Orlov (Nikolsky) did not "light up" him in his revealing articles published a month earlier in Life magazine. Secondly, if he remained beyond suspicion, he was supposed to be involved in Beria's plan for the unification of Germany and the settlement of relations with Yugoslavia.

In the spring of 1953, my position in the service was uncertain. Beria's deputy, Bogdan Kobulov, wanted to appoint me the head of the inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, that is, to supervise the execution of orders and instructions from the central apparatus by all territorial state security agencies. This did not suit me too much, since I had to bear the burden of responsibility for the entire machine of the ministry and deal with the analysis of personnel matters and conflict situations on the ground. Kruglov, Beria's first deputy, instead proposed that Eitingon and I, retaining our positions in the Bureau of Intelligence and Subversive Work, be appointed deputy chiefs of the newly created department of ideological counterintelligence. Our main task was to be the final defeat of the nationalist underground on the territory of the Soviet Union, mainly in the Baltic republics and in Western Ukraine.

I agreed, but never started a new job. Less than a week later, Beria suggested that I replace the head of the Main Counterintelligence Directorate, Fedotov. However, the next day, when Fedotov and I came to Beria's office, Kobulov quite unexpectedly offered me the post of Minister of State Security of Ukraine; then he said that, perhaps, I should be sent as a commissioner of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Germany in order to give me the opportunity to live in more comfortable conditions. Knowing Bogdan Kobulov as a great master of intrigue, I replied that I could not accept these proposals for personal reasons. I referred to the state of my wife's health and named as a possible candidate for work in Germany Amayak Kobulov, at that time the head of the department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for prisoners of war.

I think Bogdan Kobulov just wanted to get rid of me in the central office of the ministry, because I knew too much about the operations that he and Beria carried out against Georgian emigrants in Paris. I also knew that the nephew of Beria's wife, a certain Shavdia, was captured by the Germans and acted as our double agent, collaborating with the Gestapo in Paris. In 1945 he returned to Moscow and then left for Tbilisi. In 1951, Stalin ordered his arrest for collaborating with the Nazis and as one of the Mingrelian nationalists. Shavdia was sentenced to twenty-five years in strict regime camps. Beria did not release him from prison when he headed the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but family ties with a convicted criminal remained a dark spot in his

biography and harbored a potential danger.

Beria agreed with me that I could not leave Moscow. Within a week, I was appointed to the post of head of the newly created 9th department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, reporting directly to the minister. The 9th department, better known as the Bureau of Special Assignments, had under its command a brigade of special forces for conducting sabotage operations abroad. Although no one spoke directly about the nature of the tasks that the brigade should perform, my new job was consistent with Stalin's earlier recommendation - I actually became deputy head of the Main Intelligence Directorate of State Security and got the opportunity to mobilize all intelligence forces and means in case of emergencies.

After Stalin's death, we began to reconsider the main tasks in our work abroad and within the country. Beria took the initiative into his own hands.

I was among those whom he instructed to prepare memos with a detailed list and analysis of the mistakes made by party organizations and state security agencies in the fight against the nationalist underground in Lithuania and Ukraine. Beria considered it necessary to nominate local cadres to leadership positions, and to appoint people of Slavic nationalities to the positions of deputies. Our notes noted cases of unjustified deportations and repressions against ethnic groups that were not engaged in anti-Soviet activities. Beria strongly insisted on the development of national traditions in the field of culture and language. In particular, he was concerned about the problem of educating a new generation of national intelligentsia, for whom socialist ideals would be truly close. I remember Beria's proposal to introduce their own orders and awards in the republics - this, he believed, would raise a sense of national pride.

All ego created sometimes awkward situations. The newly appointed Minister of the Interior of Lithuania naively sent a memorandum in Lithuanian to Beria's secretariat, causing a real stir - no one in the center, of course, knew Lithuanian. In addition, when the minister came to Moscow to meet with Beria, he could not explain the details of a very delicate operation - a radio game with British intelligence. The reason this time was that he had lost his briefcase with documents in the hotel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Kolpachny Lane. Later there was a rumor that he lost his documents on purpose. A former party functionary, and then chairman of the executive committee of Vilnius, he had no desire to work in the state security agencies. He achieved his goal -

he was given a job in the planning and economic department of the republic.

Unfortunately, at the time the note was prepared on the mistakes in national policy in Ukraine, a conflict broke out between the newly appointed Minister of Internal Affairs Meshik and local party officials, as well as employees of the apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. Meshik, at all costs, sought to expel Khrushchev's protégé Strokach, who was fired from the authorities in 1941 for failing to take out part of the NKVD archive when the Germans surrounded Kiev. In addition, Meshik did not get along with the party leaders of Ukraine Serdyuk and Shelest. Serdyuk tried to take away from the Ministry of Internal Affairs a house that was used as a kindergarten for children of employees of the ministry; he chose this mansion in Lvov for himself and his family. Serdyuk sent his assistant to the kindergarten, and Meshik posted guards. Shelest, at that time the secretary of the Kyiv regional party committee, took the fire supervision boat for his use for hunting and did not return it. Meshik reported this to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the government.

Although it was customary to speak Russian at the meeting of the Ukrainian Central Committee, Meshik allowed himself to boldly address those present in Ukrainian, recommending that the shocked Russians, including the first secretary of the Central Committee Melnikov, learn Ukrainian. He was enthusiastically supported by the writer Alexander Korneichuk, who also spoke in Ukrainian and praised Beria, since one of his closest relatives, thanks to Beria, was appointed head of the regional department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and introduced to

general rank.

Meshik proudly told me about these episodes, which, in his words, testified to the correct line in national politics. I told him that he is a fool if he gets into conflicts with the local authorities. Then I introduced him to Muzichenko, who at one time was our illegal immigrant in Paris and had extensive experience working with real Ukrainian nationalists. We knew that he would be able to distinguish real terrorists from talkers and help Mexico avoid unnecessary clashes. Muzichenko, however, had to postpone his trip to Kyiv, because at that time Beria, at the request of Khrushchev, ordered the delivery to Moscow of the Bandera sisters, exiled to Siberia. Here they were settled in a safe house, where they were under house arrest, and Muzichenko had to convince them to send a message to Bandera in Germany in order to force him to go to a meeting with our representative.

Muzichenko was in Moscow when Beria and Meshik were arrested. Since he had not yet been confirmed in the new position of Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, this saved him from arrest. He simply stopped coming to work in the state security agencies and resumed his former medical activities at MONIKI. He was interrogated twice at the prosecutor's office regarding alleged plans in the Meshik case to revive bourgeois nationalism in Ukraine. But he was experienced enough and replied that he did not know anything, since he had not started a new job.

Abakumov remained in prison all this time, despite the fact that almost all the state security officers arrested in the same case were released, except for the head of his secretariat and the heads of the SMERSH Investigative Unit for Particularly Important Cases and the former MGB.

Beria also put an end to the investigation of the so-called "Mingrelian case", begun two years ago on the orders of Stalin. He released the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, Barami and Sharia, and the former Minister of State Security, Rapava, who, despite torture, remained adamant and did not make false confessions. However, the main organizer of the "Mingrelian case" Rukhadze, who, on Stalin's orders, fabricated it, and also installed listening devices in the apartments and dachas of Beria and his mother in Abkhazia and Tbilisi, remained in prison.

Khrushchev helped Beria put an end to the "Mingrelian case", formalizing this by the decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Beria personally went to Tbilisi after the charge of nationalism was dropped from the Georgian party organization. Mgeladze, the main opponent of Beria, who weaved intrigues against him, was removed from the post of first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. With the blessing of Khrushchev, Beria appointed the former head of his secretariat in Moscow, Mamulov, to the place of the member of the Bureau of the Central Committee for Personnel of the Communist Party of Georgia. There was a large-scale purge in the Republican Communist Party. Later, Mamulov told me that it was not Beria, but Khrushchev, who ordered him to carry out this bloodless campaign without arrests. The irony of fate was that Mamulov had to get rid of those who deceived Stalin and wrote slanderous letters to Moscow about the connection of Beria and Malenkov with the Georgian Mensheviks and nationalists, although it was Stalin who ordered such letters to be written in Georgian in order to have dirt on Beria. Later we learned that Stalin, Rukhadze and Mgeladze were discussing over dinner what the content of these denunciations.

The Mingrelian origin of Beria had hindered his career before, but in the end it turned out to be fatal. The cordial friendship between Beria and Malenkov came to an end in May 1953. The well-known playwright Mdivani, who personally knew Beria, handed a letter to the head of his secretariat, Ludwigov, in which he accused Malenkov, who had just become Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, of the fact that in his report at the XIX Congress The party allegedly used material from the speech of the tsarist Minister of the Interior, Bulygin, in the State Duma, when he said that new Gogols and Shchedrins were needed in order to raise the spiritual atmosphere in society. The accusation of such borrowing - it was about party

documents - was a serious matter, especially during the struggle for power, which escalated after the death of Stalin. Beria indignantly ordered Ludwigov to write off this letter and stop communicating with the "Georgian bastard". However, a letter in May 1953 from Beria's secretariat was forwarded to Malenkov's secretariat - the "cordial friendship" came to an end.

These intrigues took place just at the moment when Beria embarked on another initiative, this time it concerned my area of work. At a meeting of the heads of the intelligence services of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, he sharply criticized Ryaenoy, the head of foreign intelligence of the MGB, Khrushchev's nominee, for primitive and ineffective methods: Stalin's directives on the destruction of elderly emigrants (Kerensky) and minor figures, according to him, had no practical meaning .

Beria said that now the main task is to create a powerful base for intelligence operations. In Germany, for this you need to use what is left of the former agent network of the "Red Chapel" in Hamburg. In countries bordering the United States of America, it was necessary to strengthen the position of illegal immigrants. It is also necessary, he continued, to prepare a government decision obliging the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, TASS and other Soviet agencies abroad to expand support for Soviet intelligence operations abroad. He also noted the expediency of the existence of two parallel intelligence services - in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and in the Ministry of Defense. The first was to collect intelligence information of the usual type, and the second - to conduct special operations in the event of a danger of unleashing a war. His arguments, in essence, were a repetition of Stalin's guidelines, with the only difference being that from now on, preparations for sabotage and the elimination of persons objectionable to the government abroad were suspended until further notice.

Beria instructed me to prepare within a week, together with the chief of military intelligence, General of the Army Zakharov and Marshal Golovanov, who commanded long-range special bomber aviation, a report on measures to neutralize American strategic air superiority and carry out sabotage at nuclear and strategic facilities of the United States and NATO. Beria ordered the presentation of a plan to disable the US Air Force and Navy supply base in Europe. The following week, in Beria's spacious Kremlin office where the meeting was being held, Admiral Kuznetsov, commander of the Navy, thanked Beria for rehabilitating his assistant, Vice Admiral Goncharov, who died in 1948 during interrogation. Abakumov accused him, along with Kuznetsov, of anti-Stalinist views. Almost all of Kuznetsov's deputies were arrested in 1948, and Kuznetsov himself was demoted to rear admiral and appointed commander of the Pacific Fleet. Three years later, Kuznetsov wrote a letter to Stalin with proposals for the strategic rearmament of the navy and for the construction of a large submarine fleet, the creation of nuclear submarines. Kuznetsov's plan provided for a significant change in the ratio of surface and submarine ships in the Navy. Stalin supported Kuznetsov's proposals and reinstated him as commander of the naval forces, although his former deputies still remained in prison. I have always treated Kuznetsov with great respect and considered him, like many others, an outstanding military leader, highly valued in the circles of our intelligence. And this time Kuznetsov, as always and everywhere, set the tone for the work of the meeting.

I have presented a plan for the creation of illegal stations that will be able to regularly monitor approximately one hundred and fifty major Western strategic installations in Europe and the United States of America. Admiral Kuznetsov presented another course of action for our consideration. In his opinion, special operations and sabotage should be developed in accordance with the requirements of modern warfare. Current military conflicts are fleeting, he said, and must end quickly and decisively. Kuznetsov suggested discussing the possibility of applying

pre-emptive strikes, calculated due to our limited resources to destroy 3-4 US aircraft carriers. In his opinion, this would give our submariners great advantages in deploying operations against enemy sea lanes. It would make sense, he continued, to sabotage the naval bases and ports of Europe to prevent the arrival of reinforcements for American troops in Germany, France and Italy. Army General Zakharov, later chief of the General Staff, noted that the question of a founding strike against enemy strategic targets was fundamentally new in the art of war, and it needed to be seriously worked out.

Marshal Golovanov did not agree with us. He noted that in war conditions, with limited resources, it would be more realistic to assume that we would be able to inflict no more than 1-2 strikes on strategic installations on the enemy. And in this case, it is necessary not to attack the ships at the bases of the enemy, but, first of all, to destroy at the airfields part of his powerful air force, capable of inflicting a nuclear strike on our cities.

I supported Zakharov, citing examples from the practice of the Second World War and our little experience gained in the Korean War - then our legal residencies were only able to monitor US military bases in the Far East. As for the experience of the last war, it was limited to the capture of individual objects, as well as persons in possession of the most important operational and strategic information. The new requirements under the conditions of a supposed nuclear war brought to life the need to revise our entire system of sabotage operations. I said that we need not only individually trained agents, but also mobile strike teams that could be deployed by all major illegal residencies. Their task should include an attack on nuclear weapons depots or bases where aircraft with nuclear weapons are located. Our attack tactics worked well against the Germans in 1941-1944. However, our successes were partly due to the fact that the Germans were operating in hostile territory, and we had a strong intelligence network at our disposal. I also pointed out that the experience of the Second World War and the Korean War shows that the disruption of enemy supply lines, especially when they are extended over long distances, can be operationally much more important than direct attacks on military targets. True, with direct strikes, panic arises in the ranks of the enemy and outwardly this is very effective, but the destruction of supply lines is more significant, and its impact is

long term. In addition, military installations are under heavy guard, and during an attack one cannot count on putting out of action more than 2-3 installations.

The plan I put forward to use sabotage operations instead of air and naval strikes limited by our capabilities seemed convincing to the military leadership. All those present at the meeting in Beria's office with me

agreed.

Beria listened attentively to me. But he still had no idea how a reorganized sabotage service with broader rights should structure its work. Maybe, he asked, we are talking about a combined reconnaissance and sabotage group of all types of troops? If so, wouldn't it be as bad as the Information Committee that was set up? In 1947-1949, when developing operations, the committee proceeded primarily from the needs of the foreign policy course and overlooked military issues.

During the discussion, General Zakharov proposed that sabotage operations of the special services be carried out along the lines of all branches of the armed forces and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, in his opinion, priority in undercover work should belong to my service. At the same time, there should be a permanent working group for coordination at the level of deputy chiefs of military intelligence departments, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the intelligence services of the Navy and Air Force.

Beria agreed and closed the meeting. A month later, we had to submit a detailed plan with proposals for coordinating sabotage work abroad. Beria promised to help with personnel resources, especially experts in the field of weapons,

oil refining, transport and supply.

The next day, Beria summoned Kruglov and me and ordered me to allocate additional staff and funds. We decided to form a special-purpose brigade to carry out sabotage. The same brigade was under my command during the war years and was disbanded by Abakumov in 1946. Beria and Kruglov approved my proposal to involve our specialists in intelligence and partisan operations in active work in the organs. Vasilevsky, Zarubin and his wife, Serebryansky, Afanasiev, Semyonov and Taubman, dismissed from the authorities, were again returned to the Lubyanka and took high positions in the expanded 9th department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but three months after my arrest they were fired again, and Serebryansky was arrested shortly after me, and he died in prison.

In the meantime, I consulted with Marshal Golovanov about the possibilities of launching an air strike on NATO bases in Western Europe. I proposed to carry out a test flight of aircraft capable of attacking strategic targets and see if they would be detected by enemy radars. The fact is that we have already received from our agent, a Dutch pilot officer seconded to NATO headquarters, a special device ("friend or foe") that determines the identity of the aircraft on the radar screen. Our reconnaissance bomber, equipped with this device, took off from Murmansk at the end of May 1953 and flew along the northern tip of Norway, and then Great Britain, approached NATO strategic targets at a distance sufficient to deliver a bombing strike. The flight was not recorded by NATO air defense.

We coordinated the test flight with the strategic aviation command. Our liaison officer with the General Staff, Colonel Zimin, I think, reported the success of the operation to me, and I - Beria. Generals Shtemenko and Zakharov, I was told, were greatly impressed by the success of this reconnaissance operation.

In May of the same year, Beria, using his position as first deputy head of government, without prior agreement with Malenkov and Khrushchev, ordered the preparation and testing of the first hydrogen bomb.

Beria's intentions with regard to Germany and Yugoslavia reflected the confusion that reigned under Malenkov among the leaders of the country. The idea of German unification did not at all belong to Beria personally: in 1951, Stalin proposed the idea of creating a united Germany, taking into account the interests of the Soviet Union (the problem was discussed until the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961). Even before Stalin's death, Ignatiev approved a special probing questionnaire of our special services abroad on this problem. Just before May Day 1953, Beria instructed me to prepare secret intelligence measures to probe the possibility of German reunification. He told me that a neutral united Germany with a coalition government would strengthen our position in the world. East Germany, or the German Democratic Republic, would become an autonomous province of the new unified Germany. The united Germany was supposed to become a kind of buffer between America and the Soviet Union, whose interests clashed in Western Europe. This would mean concessions on our part, but the problem could be solved by paying us compensation, although that would be more like a betrayal.

Beria's plan provided for the use of German contacts of Olga Chekhova, Prince Janusz Radziwill and Grigulsvich's connections: they were supposed to spread a rumor in the Vatican that the Soviet Union was ready to compromise on the issue of German unification. We needed to test the reaction of the Vatican and American political circles, as well as influential people from the circle of West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. After such a sounding, Beria hoped to start negotiations with the Western powers.

Colonel Zoya Rybkina, head of the German department 1st Main Directorate. She was to go to Berlin and Vienna and conduct a sounding through Olga Chekhova, which, we hoped, would lead to negotiations, similar to what happened in Finland in 1944. Beria warned me that this plan

is top secret and the Molotov apparatus, like the entire Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will join the case only at the second stage, when negotiations begin.

Events in East Germany soon got out of our control, partly because of Beria's initiative. (Details about the events in Germany in May-June 1953 and about the debates on German policy that took place among the Soviet and GDR leadership, I learned from Zoya Rybkina.) In May, we summoned General Wollweber, Minister of State Security of the GDR, to Moscow, who reported us about a serious split in the leadership after the statement of Walter Ulbricht that the main goal of the GDR is the construction of a socialist state of the proletarian dictatorship. Ulbricht's statement caused heated discussions and greatly disturbed Moscow, since the mood of the Western public and politicians had to be reckoned with. Our political adviser under Ulbricht, former ambassador to China Yudin, received a scolding. Molotov suggested that the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU make a special decision that the course towards the accelerated construction of socialism in Germany, as the main goal, was erroneous. But Beria, pursuing his line and speculating on the slogan of a democratic, united and neutral Germany, said: we do not need a constantly unstable socialist Germany, the existence of which depends entirely on the support of the Soviet Union.

Molotov objected sharply, and soon a commission consisting of Beria, Malenkov and Molotov was created to work out a political line on the German question. The commission was supposed to prepare the terms of the agreement on the unification of Germany, taking into account the extension for 10 years of the payment of reparations in the form of equipment for the restoration of industry and the construction of roads and railways in the USSR, which would allow us to solve transport problems and, in case of war, quickly transfer troops to Europe. Reparations amounted to approximately 10 billion dollars - this is the amount that we previously expected to receive in the form of loans from international Jewish organizations to restore the national economy. The plan called for strengthening our position both in East Germany and in Poland, where the economic crisis that was raging at the time was forcing thousands of Poles to flee to West Germany. The question of German reunification was acute, because we had to supply both East Germany and Poland at cheap prices with raw materials and foodstuffs before collective agriculture and restored industry in these countries could bear fruit.

On June 5, 1953, Semyonov, the newly appointed High Commissar, arrived in Germany to oversee the implementation of Moscow's directives not to force the course of socialist construction and to seek the reunification of Germany. Semyonov later told Zoya Rybkina that the German leaders begged for two weeks to justify a change in political course. Semyonov insisted on a speedy response, arguing that the GDR would become an autonomous region within a united Germany. Therefore, starting from June 5, the government of the GDR was in a state of complete paralysis -

there were rumors that Ulbricht's days were numbered.

Meanwhile, in Moscow, General Wollweber and Colonel Fadeikin, our Deputy Resident in Berlin, told me about the growing discontent in Germany caused by economic difficulties and the inaction of administrative structures. Ulbricht, along with other leaders of the GDR, was summoned to Moscow in early June, where they were informed about our new political course towards East Germany, approved by the Presidium of the Central Committee of the party on June 12. In connection with Molotov's statement that at present the accelerated construction of socialism in Germany seems futile, the Presidium adopted a decision "On measures to improve the political situation in the GDR." This document obliged Wilhelm Pieck and Walter Ulbricht to change the direction of their policy and to some extent reflected the views of Beria (today there are references to this decision in a number of official publications, but the document itself has not been made public).

Although I was not present at the meeting with the delegation from Eastern

Germany, where Beria, Malenkov, Khrushchev, Molotov, Semyonov and the commander of the Soviet troops in Germany, General Grechko, were, I learned later that Ulbricht had voiced serious objections to our plan. Therefore, Beria, Malenkov and Khrushchev decided to remove him.

The outbreak of strikes and protests in the GDR on June 17, 1953, was probably provoked by its instigators, who believed that the government was unable to take retaliatory steps and was about to fall under pressure from Moscow. Another version was that the riots were provoked by Ulbricht himself, who refused to comply with the demand of the striking workers for an increase in wages. For my part, I believe that both factors were involved. There was a misconception in East Germany that the Ulbricht government was not supported by the Russians and would not oppose the strikers. When these events took place, Beria ordered Grechko and Semyonov to restore order with the help of military force. The result was tragic - thousands of people died. However, Beria did not abandon the idea of German reunification. A show of force, he hoped, would only increase our chances of reaching a compromise with the Western powers on the peaceful unification of Germany. The West, he believed, would give up the illusion that the Soviet presence in Germany could be eliminated through mass demonstrations.

As I already said, Zoya Rybkina arrived in Berlin to sound out the reaction of the West on the issue of German unification. She met with Olga Chekhova and informed me via special communications that contact had been resumed. I did not have time to report to Beria about the assignment: on June 26 he was arrested in the Kremlin. Without explaining anything, I ordered Rybkina to immediately return to Moscow by military plane.

But it was easier to order than to carry out an order. The fact is that General Grechko received instructions from Moscow obliging him to detain all employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs who had recently arrived in Germany. Amayak Kobulov, representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Germany, and Goglidze, recently appointed by Beria as head of military counterintelligence, who arrived in Berlin to restore order, were immediately arrested and sent to Moscow under guard. All means of communication were under the control of Grechko. Zoya Rybkina had to turn to him personally with a request to give her the opportunity to fly to Moscow. Fortunately, the general never took the women seriously, especially since she did not report anything about her assignment. The arrest of Beria was then still kept secret. She said that she had received orders to immediately arrive in Moscow. Grechko had no idea who I was and who this woman could be - a colonel in the state security service. He allowed her to fly out, however, accompanied by military intelligence officers. She was clearly lucky: these officers knew Rybkina from frequent visits to Germany and managed to persuade Grechko not to detain her. They also knew that for the past five years she had been the head of the German direction in the Information Committee, and then in the Intelligence Directorate of the MGB. And, finally, she was lucky that the secret task was given orally and there were no written confirmations. Beria's sounding about the reunification of Germany was interrupted before it began. On June 29, 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU canceled its decision of June 12 on the German question.

A similar story happened with Yugoslavia. Beria convinced Malenkov of the need for reconciliation with Tito. The plan to eliminate Tito was cancelled. Beria offered to send his representative, Colonel Fedoseev, to establish contact with the Yugoslav leadership. He was supposed to inform the Yugoslavs of our new course for the restoration of cooperation between our countries. The choice fell on Fedoseev because this young, energetic intelligence officer already had considerable experience and had recently been appointed to the post of deputy chief of the intelligence headquarters. I knew him during the war years, when he headed the counterintelligence service in the Moscow city administration of the NKVD and provided us with very valuable assistance in conducting radio games with German intelligence. Since 1947 he worked in the Information Committee. Because he doesn't

traveled to the West, he was not known to foreign intelligence services. Beria approved him as a resident in Belgrade, and Malenkov approved this candidacy, which was documented.

Knowing nothing about Fedoseyev's mission, I was engaged in conducting a parallel sounding aimed at reconciliation with Tito. Our agent Grigulevich was summoned to Moscow to discuss with Beria options for improving relations with Yugoslavia. And this attempt also did not take place due to the arrest of Beria.

After Orlov's (Nikolsky's) articles were published in the American Life magazine, we considered that it was risky to send Grigulevich on this mission, since he might already have been exposed by Western intelligence services. As a result, Grigulevich never returned to Italy, and the government of Costa Rica, whose ambassador he was in the Vatican and Yugoslavia, lost sight of him. In Moscow, he became one of the leading Latin American scholars. Fedoseev, like Grigulevich, never went to Belgrade: when he had to go there, Beria was arrested.

Beria's plans included a personnel reshuffle in the Hungarian leadership. He proposed Imre Nagy as a candidate for prime minister. From the 1930s, Imre Nagy was a full-time agent of the NKVD (code name "Volodya") and was highly valued by our leadership. That is why Beria planned to put him in a key post in the Hungarian government: there was no doubt that Imre Nagy would obediently carry out all the orders of Moscow.

In 1956 he led an uprising in Hungary. As I was later told, he was lured into a trap - allegedly for a secret probing conversation with representatives of the Soviet government. He was immediately arrested by a KGB task force led by Serov, Korotkov and Krokhin. Imre Nagy's collaboration with the NKVD played a fatal role in his life.

On June 5, 1953, my wife and I sent our children on vacation to Kyiv to stay with relatives, while we ourselves moved to the dacha. The Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Meshik, arranged for our children and their niece, who looked after them, to a government rest house. Everything was going perfectly, and I had no reason to worry. Things were going well in Moscow. These days I did not have to report to Beria or his deputy Kruglov about any urgent matters, and no one, in turn, bothered me with urgent assignments.

Meanwhile, in the top leadership, the situation was becoming more and more tense, which I did not know at the time. True, I noticed something. Reporting to Beria about the dispatch of Zoya Rybkina to Berlin on a special assignment and sharing with him my plans to restore our wartime intelligence ties in Germany (using the "remains" of the "Red Chapel" in Hamburg and previous contacts with industrial circles - the leadership of the largest firms "AEG" and "Thiesen"), I noticed that he was listening to me inattentively, obviously preoccupied with something.

On June 26, returning from work to the dacha, I was surprised to see a moving column of tanks that filled the entire highway, but I thought that these were ordinary exercises, poorly coordinated with the traffic police service. When I came to Lubyanka the next day, I immediately understood that something extraordinary had happened. The portrait of Beria, which hung in my waiting room on the seventh floor, was missing. The officer on duty reported that one of the employees of the commandant's office had taken the portrait without explaining anything. The atmosphere in the ministry remained calm. Contrary to widespread rumors, no orders were issued for the transfer of Interior Ministry troops to Moscow. About an hour later I was summoned to a small conference hall, where all the heads of independent departments and departments had already gathered and all the deputy ministers, except for Bogdan Kobulov, Kruglov and Serov were sitting in the chairs. Kruglov said that for the provocative anti-state actions taken in recent days, by order of the government, Beria was arrested and detained, that he was appointed Minister of the Interior. Kruglov turned to

us with a request to continue to work quietly and carry out his orders. We were also obliged to report personally to him about all the provocative steps of Beria known to us. Serov interrupted Kruglov, announcing that he would remain at the post of First Deputy Minister. He also reported on the arrest of Bogdan Kobulov, his brother Amayak, and the head of military counterintelligence Goglidze for their criminal association with Beria. In addition to them, said Serov, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Meshik, Beria's head of security Sarkisov and the head of his secretariat Lyudvigov were also arrested. We were totally amazed. Kruglov hurried to close the meeting, saying that he would report to Comrade Malenkov: the Ministry of the Interior and its troops remain loyal to the government and scab.

I quickly went to my office and immediately summoned Eitingon. It became clear to both of us that a serious purge was ahead. However, we were so naive that we believed that Kruglov, in deciding the fate of leading cadres, would take into account the interests of protecting the state. Two months ago, Beria invited Eitingon and me to work under him, although we were not close to him. Eitingon turned out to be a greater realist than I am. He knew at once that the first blow would be against the recently reinstated Jewish staff.

I immediately called the secretary of the party bureau of the 9th department, summoned him and informed us of what Kruglov had told us: Beria had been arrested as an enemy of the people. He stared at me in disbelief. I urged him to be vigilant but remain calm and warn party members not to spread any rumors. Kruglov, I said, demanded that the arrest of Beria and his henchmen remain secret until the publication of an official government report.

The list of those arrested puzzled me by the fact that it included not only big bosses, but also simple performers like Sarkisov, who was removed by Beria three weeks before his arrest. After that, Sarkisov was appointed to the post of deputy head of the department for special operations of counterintelligence inside the country, but the head of the department, Colonel Prudnikov, refused to take him on. Beria's deputy Bogdan Kobulov told Prudnikov, a participant in the guerrilla war, Hero of the Soviet Union:

"First of all, who are you to question the minister's orders? And secondly, not worry, Sarkisov will leave Moscow soon. It doesn't threaten your career.

In a word, it was absolutely clear that Sarkisov was not in favor. This indicated that the decision to arrest Beria was made earlier, when Sarkisov was still close to him, or it was made by people who did not know that Sarkisov had been removed from the post of head of the minister's security

Beria was arrested on the orders of Malenkov. However, I still cannot imagine that Beria could speak out against Malenkov, with whom he was in a trusting relationship. As soon as Beria was arrested on June 26, 1953, all members of his secretariat who knew about Mdivani's letter, which denigrated Malenkov, were immediately arrested and thrown into prison. And only after the fall of Khrushchev, eleven years later, they were amnestied.

Without waiting for the end of the working day, I went to see my sick mother, who had been in our hospital for two weeks. I notified Kruglov's secretariat about this. Calling my wife at the dacha, I arranged to meet her after the hospital in the center and have lunch together. She was more alarmed than me, and believed that the list of those arrested would be replenished, and I would definitely get into it. As head of a particularly important division of the ministry, well known to Malenkov, Molotov and Khrushchev, I could not avoid their close attention. All that remained for us was to be quieter than water and lower than the grass, do nothing and bring the children from Kyiv as soon as possible. My wife immediately called my brother, the director of a cannery in Kiev, and asked me to immediately send the children to Moscow through his own channels, and in no case turn to the Ukrainian state security service for help. She alluded to the man he was having dinner with, referring to Mexic, whose arrest had not yet been publicly announced.

Fortunately, in the hospital I met Agayants, the head of one of the departments

the intelligence department of the ministry, who did not yet know what was happening. If necessary, he could always confirm that I really visited my sick mother.

In the evening of the same day, my wife and I visited my older sister, telling her confidentially about the events that had taken place and about the arrest that threatened us both. From us, we called Kyiv again so as not to use our home phone. The older brother Grigory confirmed that he would send our children along with his niece to Moscow the next day. As a plant manager, he had the right to order train tickets and did not have to ask anyone for favors. We decided that my older sister Nadezhda would meet the children at the station and take them to her home if my wife and I were already arrested. I was sure that my wife would definitely be arrested either with me, or shortly after me. On the same day I learned the details of the arrests. Bohdan Kobulov was arrested in the building of the Central Committee on Staraya Square, where he was summoned to discuss personnel appointments, Meshik - in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

Important information was given to me two days later by my younger brother Konstantin, an ordinary employee of the Moscow Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. His wife was a typist in Malenkov's secretariat and worked in the Kremlin. Og Konstantin, I learned that Beria was arrested by Zhukov and several generals at a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the party and was kept in the bunker of the headquarters of the Moscow Military District. According to her, a nervous situation reigned in the Kremlin on the day of Beria's arrest. Sukhanov, head of Malenkov's secretariat, ordered that all employees within three hours - while the meeting of the Presidium lasted - remained at their workplaces and did not go out into the corridor. I learned from Konstantin that more than ten armed generals from the Ministry of Defense appeared in the Kremlin (an absolutely unprecedented thing!) and were summoned to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU. By order of Serov and Kruglov, Beria's first deputies, the government guards handed them over to combat duty in the Kremlin. Among them was Brezhnev, deputy head of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy. Two more employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were arrested, which was not announced to anyone: the head of the government security department, Major General Kuzmichev, and the head of the accounting and archival special department "A", Major General Gertsovsky.

Konstantin's information seriously alarmed me: the struggle for power in the Kremlin assumed dangerous proportions. Under Stalin, it was strictly forbidden to enter the Kremlin with weapons - the only ones who had weapons with them were the guards. What a precedent the minister of defense, Bulganin, created by bringing in a group of armed officers and generals who secretly carried their weapons! The armed officers did not know anything about the purpose of the call to the Kremlin: the Minister of Defense ordered that they come with their personal weapons, but did not explain anything. But what if the officers with hidden weapons were stopped by guards, someone's nerves could not stand it and shooting began in the Kremlin? The consequences could be tragic. I later learned that Marshal Zhukov had heard about the plan to arrest Beria only a few hours before it happened.

Lyudvigov was arrested at a football match by two high-ranking officers of the operational department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who were waiting for him at the exit from the Dynamo stadium. They officially announced to him that he was under arrest and took him to the Butyrka prison. Later, in prison, he told me that at that moment he decided: he was being arrested on the orders of Beria, and therefore was shocked when a few days later, during interrogation, the investigators told him that he was accused, along with Beria, of conspiracy against the Soviet government. He wondered if this was a provocation on the part of Beria in order to wrest false confessions from him and get rid of him. Then the thought flashed: since he is married to Mikoyan's niece, Beria, who knew Mikoyan closely and sometimes quarreled with him, wants to have dirt on him. However, quite soon the prosecutors convinced Ludvigov that the accusations against him and Beria could end in the execution of both.

Sarkisov was arrested on vacation, and he was also quite sure that this was done on Beria's order.

It was clear that Khrushchev was behind the coup in the Kremlin and Beria was arrested by his people, not by Kruglov and Serov, the deputy ministers of the interior, but by the military, subordinate to

directly to Bulganin, who, as everyone knew, was Khrushchev's man. In the 1930s they worked together in Moscow, Khrushchev was the first secretary of the MK and MGK of the party, and Bulganin the chairman of the Moscow Council. The fact that Beria was being held under military arrest testified that Khrushchev had taken Beria's "case" into his own hands.

Later, I learned that the military, on Bulganin's orders, took the unprecedented step of preventing Kruglov, the new interior minister, from interrogating Beria. Malenkov, formally still the head of the government, although he ordered the arrest of Beria, in fact had little influence on the course of events. Being close to Beria in the previous decade, he, in essence, was also doomed.

Khrushchev's memories of Beria's arrest look unconvincing. It has now been established that Beria did not enter into any conspiracies to seize power and overthrow the collective leadership. For this, he did not have real strength and support in the party and state apparatus. The initiatives he took showed that he only wanted to increase his influence in resolving issues of both domestic and foreign policy. Beria used his personal connections with Malenkov and actually put him in a difficult position, isolating him from other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the party. However, Beria's position depended entirely on Malenkov and his support. Beria irritated Malenkov, in alliance with Khrushchev, Beria hurried to get rid of Ignatiev, Malenkov's man, who was in charge of party control over the security agencies. Malenkov, in turn, overestimated his own strength; he did not see that Beria's support was decisive for his position in the Presidium of the Central Committee. The fact is that Beria, Pervukhin, Saburov and Malenkov represented a relatively young generation in the Soviet leadership. The "old men" - Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Kaganovich - deprived of real power by Stalin in the last years of his reign, were hostile to this young generation that came to power as a result of the repressions of the 30s and 40s. A delicate balance was established between these two age groups in March-April 1953, but the social prestige of the senior leaders was higher than that of Malenkov, Khrushchev and Beria, who in the eyes of the people were Stalin's servants, and not at all beloved leaders.

Khrushchev successfully maneuvered between these two groups - he supported Beria to weaken Malenkov when Ignatiev was compromised after the failure of the "doctors' plot". He supported him even when it was necessary to deprive Malenkov of the power that the post of secretary of the Central Committee gave him. Now it is quite clear to me that Khrushchev took advantage of the discontent among other leaders caused by Beria's surge of activity in time to eliminate him. In 1952, the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party was abolished, which made Khrushchev the only member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU among the secretaries of the Central Committee. To achieve the highest power in the country, he needed to get rid of Malenkov as the head of government and the Central Committee. To do this, it was necessary to destroy the Malenkov-Beria alliance, which provided Malenkov with real power and control over the work of the party and state apparatus. Khrushchev needed to put people loyal to him at the head of the security agencies and the prosecutor's office.

Archival documents show that Khrushchev, after the arrest of Beria, seized the initiative. Under his pressure, the Presidium of the Central Committee removed the Prosecutor General Safonov and appointed Khrushchev's protégé Rudenko to this position. On June 29, 1953, the newly appointed Prosecutor General was assigned to investigate the Beria case. In order to imagine the haste in which it was carried out, it should be borne in mind that it was conducted mainly by the same investigators who had previously been engaged in prosecutorial supervision of the so-called "Zionist conspiracy" and the "MGB case". I never believed that Beria organized a conspiracy to seize power. Now I was even more convinced of this by the writer Kirill Stolyarov, who had the opportunity to get acquainted with the materials of the Beria case. The indictment makes no reference to his orders, specific dates or verbal instructions. There is also no indication of the meeting places of the "conspirators" and the content of their plan to seize power. On the contrary, the case materials indicate that Beria was busy at that time

with their love affairs. Stolyarov asked the question: how can a person who seeks to seize power spend time with his mistress on the day when they are supposedly scheduled for a coup d'état? There is no reference in the file to what forces he planned to use for the coup.

The accusations against Beria were based only on his "treacherous initiatives" in the field of national politics, steps aimed at normalizing relations with Yugoslavia, and his intentions to unify Germany. According to Stolyarov, the version of the "conspiracy" included Beria's connection with the British Intelligence Service: the prosecutor made this conclusion based on Beria's order to close the investigation into the case of Maisky, our ambassador to the UK, who was accused of spying for the British. The indictment, Stolyarov told me, stated that Maisky was to take the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of Beria. Beria was accused of ordering the preparation of a test of a hydrogen bomb without the sanction of the Central Committee. Meanwhile, no one canceled this order after his arrest, and the preparation continued throughout June, when Beria was already in prison, and the test was carried out in August.

One of the main accusations against Beria was that during the civil war, in 1919, he was an agent of Musavat nationalist intelligence and allegedly established secret contacts with the British intelligence service in Baku, which introduced him into the Bolshevik organization. The verdict in his case stated that Beria destroyed all witnesses to his treacherous behavior during the years of the civil war in the Caucasus and slandered the memory of the glorious Bolshevik Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the hero of the Georgian people and a true friend of Lenin and Stalin.

Later, in the 1950s and until the August 1991 coup, all leaders from Khrushchev to Gorbachev continued to claim that Ordzhonikidze became a victim of Stalin and Beria because of his opposition to the Stalinist repressions of the 30s. However, archival documents paint a completely different picture. According to Mamulov, head of Beria's secretariat, Ordzhonikidze prepared and personally wrote a statement to the Party Control Commission confirming that Beria had been sent by the Communist Party to an organization of Azerbaijani nationalists in order to infiltrate their special services. His work there was of value to the Bolshevik underground in Baku during the period 1918-1920. This document is in the "Beria fund", in the presidential archive. There should also be documents confirming Stalin's personal conflicts with Ordzhonikidze. The latter **defended** individuals, but there is no evidence that he objected in principle to arrests and reprisals.

In January 1991, the minutes of the Plenum of the Central Committee on the case of Beria were unexpectedly printed in the journal Izvestia of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The speeches at the Plenum of Molotov, Malenkov, Khrushchev, Mikoyan and others show that the accusations against Beria were based on rumors that the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee themselves spread. The protocol does not contain any direct evidence, but is replete with vague remarks: "I thought", "From the very beginning I did not trust him", and the like.

Following the arrest of Beria, in late June or early July 1953, Malenkov appointed the secretary of the Central Committee of the party, Shatalin, concurrently as first deputy minister of the interior, entrusting him with overseeing foreign intelligence. I immediately reported to him about my work against American strategic bases and asked for further instructions, showing that I was concerned about serious matters, and not about the intrigues of the authorities. I asked him to authorize further study of the combat readiness of NATO bases. In reply he declared:

"I'm not here to make decisions. And I'm not going to sign the papers.

And he returned my note-report without comment.

After the arrest of Beria was officially announced and he was expelled from the party and called an enemy of the people, the party asset of the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs took place. Speeches by Malenkov and Shatalin explaining the reasons for the arrest of Beria

to the professionals gathered in the conference room sounded naive and childishly helpless. The audience silently listened to Shatalin's revelations that in order to lull Beria's vigilance, the Central Committee deliberately resorted to deceit, making deliberately false decisions and giving appropriate orders. All this was unprecedented. We all believed that our leadership would not, under any circumstances, accept a directive to deceive party members, even for the most noble purpose.

I was then so naive that I believed that everything was different under Stalin. Yes, and we all believed that such cynicism was impossible. Shatalin, meanwhile, continued his speech. According to him, the leadership of the Central Committee of the Party and Comrade Malenkov, together with famous military leaders - he mentioned Marshal Zhukov and Generals Batitsky and Moskalenko, who helped carry out the arrest of Beria - performed a heroic feat.

"It was not at all easy to plan and carry out the arrest of such a villain," Shatalin said.

Eitingon, Reichmann, and I, who were sitting side by side, exchanged significant glances. We immediately realized that there was no Beria conspiracy, there was an anti-Beria conspiracy in the country's leadership.

Immediately after Shatalin, the Deputy Minister for Human Resources Obruchnikov took the floor and called Raikhman, Eitingon and me persons who were not trustworthy. He was not our enemy at all - he did what he was ordered to do. Obruchnikov attacked me for surrounding myself with odious and suspicious personalities like Eitingon, Serebryansky and Vasilevsky, who had previously been arrested and suspended from work in intelligence. All my attempts to answer these accusations were thwarted by the presiding Serov.

Only in 1991 did I find out: Obruchnikov simply repeated word for word what Kruglov said at the Plenum in the Kremlin. Unlike Serov, Kruglov was not a key figure in the conspiracy against Beria: he was so afraid for himself that in these troubled days he lost half

your weight.

Shatalin reported that Colonel Potapov, the head of the department in the counter-intelligence department, showed political myopia and blatant incompetence: meeting with his informants on the eve of Beria's arrest, he allowed himself to praise his political foresight. Shatalin quoted a letter from an informant who studied at the Institute of Foreign Languages. I saw how Potapov's face turned pale when he heard Malenkov's question: "Is this man here?" Potapov got up, but was unable to say anything. Serov intervened, declaring that such irresponsible people who allow anti-party statements cannot attend closed party meetings, and Potapov was expelled from the hall. Fortunately for him, he did not occupy such a high position that it was worth starting a high-profile case - he was fired from the bodies with a party penalty.

Even though the party activist had knocked me out of my peace of mind, I still hoped that life in the ministry would soon return to normal again. I was careful to come to work, but I was not assigned any significant cases. Judging by my notes, the actin took place on July 15, and on August 5 I was summoned to Kruglov's office and ordered to bring the intelligence file of Stamenov, the Bulgarian ambassador to Moscow in 1941-1944, an NKVD agent whom I supervised. Without any explanation, Kruglov said that they were waiting for us at the "instance" - this meant that we were going to the Kremlin. We passed through the Spassky Gates and turned right towards the building of the Council of Ministers that I knew. There we went through the same corridor as in February 1953, when I last saw Stalin. We were received in a very special way. Kruglov and I immediately understood: something unusual must happen. Instead of inviting the minister and his subordinate to the office, the head of the secretariat, Malenkov, asked Kruglov to stay in the reception room (this did not happen under Stalin), and he suggested that I go to Stalin's former office.

Khrushchev, Molotov, Malenkov, Bulganin and Voroshilov sat at the table. Although

it was believed that as Chairman of the Council of Ministers Malenkov was the head of the collective leadership, he greeted me and invited me to sit not he, but Khrushchev. According to established practice, at meetings of this kind, an official address was adopted by last name with the addition of the word "comrade". However, Khrushchev addressed me differently:

Good afternoon, Comrade General. You look exactly like the picture (I was in military uniform). Sit down.

Then he continued in the usual official manner of a party leader:

- Comrade Sudoplatov, you know that we arrested Beria for treacherous activities. You have worked with him for many years. Beria writes that he wants to explain himself to us. But we don't want to talk to him. We have invited you to find out some of his traitorous activities. We think that you will be frank in your answers to the game.

After a pause, I replied:

"My party duty is to present the true facts to the leadership of the party and government. - Explaining that I was struck by the exposure of Beria as an enemy of the people, I added: - Unfortunately, I learned about his plot against the government only from an official report.

Malenkov entered the conversation and demanded that I explain my participation in Beria's covert attempts in the first months of the war to establish contact with Hitler in order to start peace negotiations on the basis of territorial concessions.

Stamenov was our longtime agent, I replied. At the beginning of the war, on July 25, Beria summoned me to his place and ordered me to meet with Stamenov. I was supposed to use it to spread misinformation among the diplomatic corps in Moscow. The disinformation boiled down to the fact that a peaceful settlement with the Germans on the basis of territorial concessions was quite possible. At the same time, I specified that Beria wanted to meet with Stamenov himself, but Molotov forbade him. On his own initiative, Stamenov, in order to impress the Bulgarian Tsar, had to convey these rumors, citing a "reliable source at the top." There was no written order to this effect. I also said that, with Molotov's permission, I had arranged for Stamenov's wife to get a job at the Institute of Biochemistry of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Our interception service, which had access to all Stamenov's ciphers and the diplomatic mail of the embassy, did not detect our disinformation in messages to Sofia - the rumor did not leave the Bulgarian embassy. It was decided to cancel the operation.

Malenkov interrupted me, offering to go to the reception and write an explanatory note on this issue. Meanwhile, Kruglov was called into the office, and when Malenkov's secretary reported that I had already written an explanatory note, I was again invited into the office.

Later, I learned that Beria's testimony on this episode said that he had received orders from the government to create conditions with the help of Stamenov that would give us the opportunity to maneuver in order to buy time to gather forces. To do this, it was decided to plant disinformation through Stamenov and prevent the further advance of the German troops.

Khrushchev read out to the audience my explanation, which took up one page. Molotov continued to remain silent, and Khrushchev again took the initiative in his own hands and offered to talk about my work under Abakumov and Beria in the post-war period. And here, it seems to me, I made a fatal mistake.

After I outlined the planned operations against NATO military bases, Khrushchev asked me to report on secret liquidations. I started with an action against Konovalov and Trotsky, and then moved on to special operations in Minsk and Berlin during the war years. I named four post-war actions: with Oggins, Samet, Romzha and Shumsky - and in each case I indicated who ordered the liquidation, and that all these actions were taken with the approval not only of Stalin, but also of Molotov, Khrushchev and Bulganin. Khrushchev immediately corrected me and, turning to the Presidium, declared that in most cases the initiative

came from Stalin and our foreign comrades. There was an awkward silence that lasted for a full minute. Suddenly, I pat taught support. Bulganin said that these operations were undertaken against sworn enemies of socialism. Khrushchev ended the conversation by turning to me:

The party has nothing against you. We believe you. Keep working. Soon we will ask you to prepare a plan to eliminate the Bandera leadership, which is at the head of the Ukrainian fascist movement in Western Europe, which has the audacity to insult the leaders of the Soviet Union.

After that, he made it clear that there were no more questions, and Kruglov gestured for me to wait for him in the waiting room. I stayed there for an hour and a half, my anxiety gradually growing. I did not believe a single word of what Khrushchev told me in conclusion. Malenkov's hostility and Molotov's silence made a heavy impression on me. Stamenov's agent business, begun in 1934, when he was the third secretary of the Bulgarian embassy in Rome, was never returned to me. I saw how Molotov and Bulganin carefully looked through it when I answered questions. It then remained in the Presidium of the Central Committee.

I was greatly disturbed. The likelihood that Kruglov would leave the office with an order for my arrest seemed quite real. Finally he appeared and made a sign to follow him. Already in the car, he told me to immediately submit to him a report written with my own hand on all cases of liquidation known to me - both inside the country and abroad - including the cancellation of orders. It was about operations, the orders to carry out or cancel them came from Beria, Abakumov and Ignatiev.

In my office, I compiled a list of all special actions known to me and introduced them to Colonel Studnikov, secretary of the party bureau of the 9th department. In the report, I listed only those operations that were personally known to me and in which I was involved in one way or another. Then I asked Studnikov to take the document to Kruglov's secretariat, because he wanted to be sure that I had a witness. And rumors were already circulating in the ministry that my service was responsible for the secret massacres committed on the orders of Beria.

After Kruglov's secretary confirmed that Studnikov had submitted my report in a sealed envelope, I went to the dacha to discuss the situation with my wife. Although we tried to remain optimistic, she turned out to be right in believing that most likely the new leadership sees me as an active accomplice in all Beria's affairs.

After 2-3 days, I learned from my younger brother Konstantin that my name began to appear in the protocols of the interrogations of Beria, Kobulov and Mairanovsky. I called Prosecutor General Rudenko on the turntable and demanded to come to him in order, as he put it, "to clarify some essential facts known to you." Before going to the Prosecutor General on Pushkinskaya Street, I said to myself: I am not going to shoot myself and I will fight to the end - I have never been either Beria's accomplice, or even a person who was part of his inner circle.

In the USSR Prosecutor's Office, I ran into an army general, Hero of the Soviet Union Maslennikov, who left Rudenko's office. We nodded to each other, and I had time to notice that his face was grim.

As First Deputy Minister of the Interior, he commanded the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; he received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union as a front commander during the war. I have always treated him with great respect.

Colonel of Justice Tsaregradsky was in Rudenko's office: during the conversation he did not utter a single word and only carefully wrote down Rudenko's questions and my answers. Rudenko stated that he had received instructions from the Central Committee of the Party to formalize my explanations, then attaching them to the Beria case, and emphasized that my explanations of the story with Stamenov contained references to Stalin and Molotov. They should be excluded, he said, and replaced with references to Beria, who gave you all orders and orders

which he will receive in the "instance".

I did not object: after all, for everyone who was familiar with the orders of those times, such a formulation of the question was considered normal. Thus, in my memorandums to the minister, I never wrote that I was proposing this or that action on the orders of Comrade Khrushchev or Malenkov. Instead of names and positions, they spoke and wrote "instance", which recognized it as expedient to carry out this or that operation.

From the very beginning, I did not like the tone and the very questions that Rudenko asked. They were like this:

- When you received Beria's criminal order to start probing the possibility of a secret peace agreement with Hitler?

I immediately protested, noting that such expressions as "criminal order" were not used by comrades Malenkov and Khrushchev when they asked questions and listened to my explanations. I learned about the criminal acts of Beria only from an official government report. I myself, as a senior operative, could not imagine that the person appointed by the government to lead the security agencies was a criminal, now exposed.

Rudenko was very dissatisfied with my recorded answers. Although he retained politeness in his address, he reproached me for being too official and using bureaucratic expressions in exposing such a sworn enemy of the party and government as Beria. Naturally, I returned to the Lubyanka in the most gloomy mood: replaying the conversation in the prosecutor's office in my memory, I tried to imagine what would follow. I understood that the future did not bode well for me, and I was absolutely right. Soon I became aware of changes of a very ominous nature. First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Serov announced to me: the 9th department is no longer an independent unit, but is part of the Main Intelligence Directorate, which, after the arrest of Beria, was headed by Panyushkin. He was an opinionated but initiativeless bureaucrat who never gained any experience in intelligence operations despite being both ambassador and resident in China and then in Washington in the early 1950s. This clearly ran counter to Khrushchev's assurances that I would continue my work as before. Panyushkin and Serov tried to find out as much as possible from me about the operational plans of my service. Although they confirmed that I was still the deputy head of the intelligence department, to my surprise, they offered me to take a vacation - to rest, for example, in a ministerial sanatorium. I agreed, but said that the school year was about to start, I could take a vacation after the children went to school.

As I considered the proposal for a vacation, I became more and more inclined to think that they might want to arrest me quietly, outside of Moscow, and keep the arrest secret. Having risen to my seventh floor, I learned the news that shocked me - Maslennikov shot himself in his office. Later, I learned that he was interrogated about Beria's alleged plans to bring the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs under his command into Moscow and arrest the entire government. Such a plan did not really exist, and Maslennikov decided that it was better to commit suicide than to be arrested. So he defended his honor as an army general.

The situation was extremely tense. My wife made sure that I did not have access to weapons at home - she was afraid that I would commit suicide in order to avoid arrest and save my family from deportation to Siberia.

These days, Raikhman visited us, hung with Serov a week after the party activist in the Beria case. Reichman, who had connections in government circles, said he was assured that the purge would be limited to those already arrested along with Beria, and he hoped that he and Eitingon would only be forced to resign. We both wanted to think it would. After all, we never belonged to the number of persons close to Beria, and those who really belonged to them, such as Kruglov and Serov, were still in power. Reichman's assumption turned out to be wrong.

Eitingon, Elizabeth and Vasily Zarubin, Serebryansky, Afanasiev, Vasilevsky and Semenov were suspended from work. Eitingon and Serebryansky were later arrested and the others fired, although the oldest of them was in his early 50s. Semyonov, known for his heroic deeds in obtaining atomic secrets for our country, was expelled from the organs without a pension. Six months after my arrest, Zoya Rybkina was fired from intelligence. She was sent to serve in the Gulag system in the North. She retired in 1955, having received a pension from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and not from the KGB.

Several days have passed. On August 21, 1953, I was arrested. It was Friday. I was in my office when the duty officer of the secretariat of the ministry called and asked if I was going to call Eitingon, my deputy, to process his pension file due to the absence of documents on foreign business trips in the personnel. The officer on duty, a lieutenant colonel, that is, younger than me in rank, was interested in a case that did not fall within his official competence. I realized that this was a bad omen... After some time, Eitingon called and said that he was called to the personnel department of the ministry, and he had an ulcer, so he could not go. I replied that I did not know why he was called. An hour passed - Major Bychkov, my secretary, appeared at the door of the office. A package had been delivered, he said, with a secret personal directive from the minister. At that time, I had Studnikov, one of my deputies and secretary of the party organization, on my report. I ordered him to leave the office, and Bychkov brought in three officers.

I knew one of them - it was Lieutenant Colonel Gordeev, head of the service responsible for arrests, detentions and searches in especially important cases. Gordeev personally carried out the arrests of Voznesensky, a member of the Politburo, Kuznetsov, secretary of the Central Committee of the party, Shakhurin, minister of the aviation industry, and other senior officials. I immediately asked if they had a warrant for my arrest. Gordeev presented it and said that the order had been signed by Kruglov, and the warrant by Serov. Then I suggested not to go through the reception, so as not to cause panic among the employees, but to go out through another door. Ego was a gross violation of the law, but they agreed. By all rights, I had to sign the act of conducting a search in my office and remain in place until it was completed.

We went down from the seventh floor to the inner prison, located in the basement of the Lubyanka. Without formalities, I filled out a registration card and was locked in a prison cell as prisoner number eight.

I was so worried that I didn't remember what was going on around me. I only remember that I had a terrible headache, but, fortunately, I found pills in my pocket. Then I realized, to my surprise, that I had not even been subjected to a personal search, only checked to see if I had a weapon with me. It was time for dinner, I forced myself to eat a spoonful of soup to swallow a pill, and began to consider my position. At that moment, the door opened and two guards hurriedly took me to the administrative block of the prison, where they searched me. They took everything from me, including headache pills. They removed the Swiss chronometer watch I had bought fifteen years ago in Belgium from my hand and put it in the breast pocket of my jacket. I was led to a closed prison car, and at the last moment one of the guards snatched my watch out of his pocket. This petty theft shocked me: I could not imagine that the guards of a particularly secret inner prison could behave like pickpockets. That's what I thought at that moment, although it became clearer to me that I was doomed. Then I suddenly thought that maybe I could use the theft of the watch to my advantage.

I was taken to the Butyrka prison, where the search was repeated again, then placed in solitary confinement, which was no different from the Finnish prison cell, where I had to spend several months in my youth. The first interrogation took place on the same day, late in the evening. Rudenko and Colonel of Justice Tsaregradsky interrogated me. Rudenko announced to me in a rude tone that I was arrested as an active participant in Beria's conspiracy, the purpose of which was to seize power, that I was Beria's confidant and accomplice in secret deals with foreign powers against the interests of the Soviet state, that I had organized a series of

terrorist acts against personal enemies of Beria and planned terrorist attacks against the leaders of the Soviet state.

After listening to these monstrous accusations, I began to protest sharply against the illegal actions against me as an arrested person: I was not present during the search in my office, they did not give me an inventory of the things seized during the search, and in the end, when they were delivered under escort to the Butyrka prison, warden swiss wrist watch-chronometer.

Rudenko and Tsaregradsky stared at me dumbfounded, not believing their own ears. Finally, Rudenko came to his senses and said that he would order everything to be sorted out. While both were confused, I decided to go longer and protest that I was being interrogated against the law at night. But Rudenko was already on the alert and cut me off:

"We will not adhere to the rules when interrogating sworn enemies of Soviet power. You might think that formalities were observed in your NKVD. We will do the same with you, Beria, and with your entire gang.

Rudenko sent a copy of the protocol of my first interrogation dated August 21, 1953 to Malenkov. I learned about this forty years later, when President Yeltsin's adviser, general palkovnik Dmitry Vatkogonov, showed this document to my son. The protocol, we must pay tribute to Rudenko, does not contain falsifications and fabricated confessions. It recorded that I did not admit the charges against me, but I became aware of Beria's "treacherous" activities from an official report and I did not know about any conspiracy in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. True, my protests were not mentioned in the protocol.

The next morning, the duty officer appeared in the cell with an inventory of the items taken from me. during the search of things, among them was a chronometer watch. I signed the document.

At the second interrogation, which, by the way, took place during the day, Rudenko politely asked about my biography. Answering his questions, I stressed that I had no connection with Beria until his appointment in 1938 to the central apparatus of the NKVD.

Suddenly, Rudenko invited me to testify against Beria: to tell about his plan of secret collusion with Hitler to conclude a separate peace through the mediation of the Bulgarian ambassador Stamenov, about the involvement of the "English spy" Maisky to establish secret contacts with Churchill, and, finally, about the terrorist attacks being prepared to destroy Soviet leadership with the help of poisons. Rudenko added that Beria also canceled the government's order to kidnap the leaders of the Georgian emigration in Paris, since his wife's uncle was among them. It is your Party duty to help us expose Beria's villainous plans, he said.

Firstly, I did not know about these monstrous plans, I answered, and secondly, Stamenov was our agent, through him, on the orders of the government, disinformation was launched, designed for diplomatic circles and ultimately the Germans, about a possible peace treaty with Hitler on the basis of territorial concessions, in order to gain time, stop the advance of the German troops. As for Maisky, the last time I spoke with him was in 1946, when Beria was no longer in charge of the state security agencies, but was engaged only in intelligence on atomic weapons, and I have not had any contact with him since then. The report of the British sector presented to me during interrogation, in which Maisky's contacts were analyzed, signed by Fedotov, one of the leaders of the Information Committee at that time, was an ordinary official document and was sent to all heads of intelligence services. I also denied involvement in terrorist plans against Beria's enemies. During my thirty years of service in the security forces, I did everything, often risking my life, to protect the government, the state and the Soviet people from our common enemies.

Rudenko rudely interrupted me and presented another accusation: I had not carried out the order of Stalin and Malenkov to liquidate such bitter enemies of the Soviet state as Kerensky and Tito. He said:

Have no illusions that if you and Eitingon carried out operations many years ago to liquidate Trotsky and Konovalovs, then this will save you. The party and the government offer you to cooperate with us in exposing the criminal actions of Beria, and your fate depends on how you help us. If you refuse to cooperate with us, then we will destroy not only you, but your entire family. You are now prisoner number eight in a group of fifty people arrested in the Beria case.

During the years of repressions and show trials, of course, I knew what methods were used to obtain confessions and perjury. Vannikov, Beria's deputy on the special committee on the atomic problem, arrested in 1941 on Stalin's orders, told me that he was beaten and deprived of sleep until he falsely testified that he had engaged in sabotage.

From the investigation files of our intelligence officers arrested in 1937-1938 (I looked through their dossiers in 1941, when I suggested to Beria that employees with experience in working and fighting the enemy abroad be released from prisons), I understood one thing: although your fate is predetermined, the only way to keep your human dignity and your name pure is to deny the crimes attributed to you until you have the strength. At the same time, I understood that in saving myself and my family, I should not be skeptical about the existence of Beria's conspiracy. That is why I declared that I was ready to report all the facts known to me. At the same time, I continued to insist that I knew nothing about Beria's conspiracy and the liquidations of people objectionable to him. I said that the order for the planned kidnapping of the leaders of the Georgian emigration in Paris and its cancellation came from the government, which was confirmed after Beria's arrest at a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU on August 5, 1953 by Minister Kruglov in my presence.

This was my last meeting with Rudenko. A day later, the interrogations were resumed, but they were now conducted by Tsaregradsky, who formally charged me with a conspiracy involving Stamenov to conclude a secret separate peace with Hitler; in the creation of a special group under the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs to carry out, on the orders of Beria, secret murders of persons hostile to him and leaders of the party and government in collusion with the "Zionist" Mairanovsky, the former head of "Laboratory-X", to commit these murders using special poisons, which cannot be found. According to him, I used Mairanovsky, who was arrested before me, as allegedly my relative and confidant to kill Beria's enemies in safe houses and dachas of the NKVD-MGB.

To these accusations, he added participation in a conspiracy to seize power in the country and concealment from the government of information about the treacherous actions of the Yugoslav "Tito clique" in 1947 and 1948 and Beria's intention to flee abroad. In particular, they talked about Beria's plan to use a bomber from an air base near Murmansk to escape to the West. I rejected these speculations and declared that the Air Force was not under my control and therefore I could not help in the implementation of such a plan. The mention of an air force base near Murmansk clearly showed how the operation to successfully test the NATO air defense system was distorted. The flight of our long-range bomber over military installations in Norway made it possible to determine the vulnerability of the Americans and the British. When, almost forty years later, I met with Colonel Zimin, our officer who was in contact with the General Staff, he told me that that flight almost led to his arrest. It is known that Beria, as the first deputy head of government, authorized this flight, but did not report to Malenkov. It was this fact that was cited as evidence that Beria wanted to use the air base near Murmansk in case his plot failed.

Colonel-General Shtemenko, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, as the initiator of these "treacherous plans", who was not even fifty then, was forced to resign. Khrushchev and Malenkov spared him - they did not want the highest military officials to appear before the court in the Beria case. Brezhnev returned Shtemenko to the active army almost fifteen years later to develop plans for a military invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Shtemenko completed the task brilliantly and received the rank of army general and the fourth star of the Hero of the Soviet Union for this.

Tsaregradsky charged me with the fact that I "in the most cowardly and treacherous" way disrupted the operation to eliminate Tito. All protests and demands to give me the opportunity to refute these accusations, of course, were ignored.

Tsaregradsky accused me of connection with the executed "enemies of the people" - Spiegelglas, Mali and other scouts. He tried to present me as their accomplice, stating that Beria knew about the existence of incriminating connections with them, but preferred to keep silent about them in order to more reliably recruit me into his organization of conspirators. By deceiving the party and the government, I allegedly received undeservedly high awards for my work from the hands of Beria. At the same time, he said, Beria hid from the Central Committee and the government that there were a lot of compromising materials on me in the Investigative Department of the NKVD, and he achieved my appointment as one of the leaders of Soviet intelligence.

During the war years, according to Tsaregradsky, following Beria's instructions, I secretly mined government dachas and country residences, and then hid the mining of these objects from the Kremlin Security Directorate in order to eliminate the leaders of the party and government at the right time for the conspirators. Later, I learned that my deputy colonel Orlov, with whom we worked together during the war years, was summoned to the prosecutor's office - he was the chief of staff of the troops of the Special Group under the NKVD and commanded a special-purpose brigade. He was ordered to inspect, together with a group of employees, government residences in the Minsk Highway area in search of mines laid on my orders. The search continued for a month and a half, no mines were found.

In reality, the situation was as follows. I was assigned to supervise the mining of roads and facilities in Moscow and the Moscow region in order to block the German offensive in October 1941 near Moscow. But after the Germans were beaten off, the mines were removed, and all this was done under strict control according to a detailed plan. Obviously, Khrushchev and Malenkov believed this story about the mining of their dachas, concocted in the prosecutor's office or obtained at the cost of forced confessions. Special groups of sappers also tried to discover the treasures "hidden" by Beria in special caches: they were searched for near his dacha, at safe houses and dachas of the NKVD in the Moscow region, but found nothing.

I was not beaten during interrogations, but I was deprived of sleep. The investigative teams of young officers, who succeeded each other, endlessly repeated the same question until five in the morning: do you admit your participation in the treacherous plans and actions of Beria?

After about a month and a half, it became clear to me that recognition was not at all important for Tsaregradsky. They will simply bring me under the formal conclusion of the case and shoot me as an unarmed enemy of the party and government, stubbornly denying his guilt. However, I realized that some of the arrested, for example, Bogdan Kobulov, are trying to play for time. Tsaregradsky showed me excerpts from the protocol of his interrogation: Kobulov did not testify about espionage, operations with foreign agents, instead he said that Sudoplatov's apparatus was "clogged" with suspicious individuals. An experienced investigator, Kobulov tried to create the impression that he was cooperating with the prosecutor's office and could be useful to her in the future. For me, this option was unacceptable. I understood that I was included in the list of persons and officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to be destroyed. The accusations against me were based on facts that the government of the country did not consider in their true light, but as an excuse to get rid of me - an unwanted witness.

While the interrogations were going on, I was in solitary confinement. I did not get confrontations with witnesses or so-called accomplices, but I had a feeling that other key figures in this case were very close by. For example, I recognized Merkulov's gait when he was taken for interrogation along the corridor past my cell. I knew that Merkulov was close to Beria in the Caucasus and later in Moscow, but for the last eight years I had not worked with him, since he was removed from the post of Minister of State Security back in 1946. I realized that Rudenko

was instructed to arrange the liquidation of people who were part of Beria's entourage even in the past. I also knew that Merkulov had suffered a heart attack immediately after Stalin's death and was seriously ill. If Beria planned his conspiracy, it is impossible to imagine that Merkulov could play any serious role in it.

At this stage of the investigation, I decided to act in the spirit of the advice that my predecessor and mentor Spiegelglas gave to his illegal immigrants who were caught red-handed and did not have the opportunity to deny their guilt, gradually stop answering questions, gradually stop eating, throw away part of the food every day without declaring a hunger strike. in the shack It is guaranteed that after two or three weeks you will fall into prostration, then a complete refusal of food. It will be some time before the prison doctor appears and diagnoses - exhaustion; then hospitalization - and force-feeding.

I knew that Shpigelglas had been "broke" in the Lefortovo prison. He only lasted this game for two months. An example for me was Kamo (Ter-Petrosyan), who led an underground militant group that, on Lenin's orders, seized money from a Tbilisi bank in 1907 and smuggled it to Europe. There, Kamo was captured by the German police when people tried to exchange the stolen money with her. The tsarist government demanded his extradition, but Kamo offered passive resistance: he pretended to have fallen into a stupor⁷. The best German psychiatrists pointed to the deterioration of his mental condition. This saved Kamo. After four years in a German prison psychiatric hospital, he was extradited to Russia to continue medical treatment in the prison infirmary, from which he managed to escape. After the revolution, Kamo worked in the Cheka with Beria in the Caucasus and died in Tbilisi in 1922: he was riding a bicycle along a steep street and literally rolled under the wheels of a car.

As Kamo told the young Chekists, the most crucial moment comes when a spinal tap is done to check the patient's pain reaction and bring him out of his stupor. If you manage to withstand terrible pain, any commission of psychiatrists will confirm that you cannot be interrogated or stand trial.

By the end of autumn I started to lose strength. Tsaregradsky tried to deceive me, saying that all was not lost for me: past merit could be taken into account. But I didn't answer the questions he asked me. Indeed, the despair that seized me was so strong that one day I threw an aluminum bowl of prison gruel in the face of a warden. Soon a female doctor appeared in the cell, I did not answer a single question, and she offered to transfer me to the hospital block of inpatient examination.

I was taken to the hospital block on a stretcher and left lying in the corridor in front of the doctor's office. Suddenly, a troupe of imprisoned criminals appeared, three or four people, who were used as orderlies. They started yelling that it was necessary to do away with this cop, and rushed to beat me. I was too weak to resist, and only dodged, trying to weaken the force of the blows. The beating lasted several minutes, but I had the firm conviction that doctors were watching this scene from their offices. The returning guard drove my tormentors away. I understood: the criminals were instructed not to hit me on the head.

In the ward, they began to force-feed me. I have the most vague memories of this time, because I was actually in a semi-conscious state. After a few days in the hospital, I had a puncture - the pain was really terrible, but I still survived and did not scream.

From the records kept by my wife, it follows that I remained in the psychiatric department of the hospital in Butyrki for more than a year. And all this time I was force-fed. I was able

⁷ Stupor (Latin stupor - stupor) - a sharp depression observed in some psychoses, expressed in complete immobility, silence.

survive only thanks to the secret support of his wife. After two or three months, I began to feel this support: every week a package was delivered to the prison, and the orderlies laid out its contents in front of me to stimulate my appetite - fresh fruit, fish, tomatoes, cucumbers, fried chicken ... I saw that the food, which was brought to me, was not like the one that is sometimes given to especially important prisoners to make them talk, and I knew, looking at the stuffed fish, that only my mother-in-law could cook it. My heart was filled with joy: everything is in order in the family, you don't have to worry, and Tsaregradsky said that my relatives were deported and renounced me as an enemy of the people.

A few months later, a nurse who was constantly on duty in my ward said words that struck me:

— Pavel Anatolyevich, I see you don't eat tomatoes. - And, looking into my eyes, she added: - I will make you tomato juice. He will back you up. People say in order to survive, it is simply necessary.

Thus, a special friendship developed between us. During her shifts, she would sit next to me in the hospital bed and silently read a book. Once I noticed the newspaper in which the book was wrapped and saw a message about the execution of Abakumov. This led me to the idea that, consequently, both Beria and all the responsible employees arrested in his case were shot. There were also several names of MGB officers much lower than me in rank. Well, I decided, there is no need to wait for mercy. So the game must continue. When I resisted force-feeding—sometimes this happened in the presence of a sister who was friendly to me, but more often in the presence of others—I often fainted from weakness in the struggle with the overseer who force-fed me. But thanks to the nurse, I now knew something about what was going on in the wild. The books she read turned out to be wrapped in a newspaper with important information for me. I understood that the move with the newspaper was invented by the wife, who was able to attract her sister to her side. Every week my wife appeared in Butyrki - programs and small sums of money transferred to my account spoke of her visits.

I was lucky that I did not get into the first wave of convicts in the Beria case. Beria's wives Goglidze, Kobulova, Meshik, Mamulov and others were arrested and exiled.

Shortly after my arrest, Vera Spector, our housemate (with her husband Mark Spector in the twenties, her wife worked in the Odessa GPU), met my wife and gestured that she wanted to talk to her without witnesses on the back stairs. Upon meeting she said:

“Mark sends his regards and asks me to be sure to tell you: the government has canceled the decree according to which the Ministry of the Interior or any other department had the right to subject family members of enemies of the people to administrative expulsion without a corresponding court decision.

Although his wife was bullied in every possible way and demanded that she vacate the apartment, she persisted and declared that she would obey only the decision of the court.

Her meeting with Spector himself, a retired colonel of state security, turned out to be extremely important. He was a very insightful person. During the war, he headed the counterintelligence service of the Navy in the Northern Fleet, and then for a year he was deputy head of the secretariat of the NKGB-MGB. He suffered a heart attack and retired in 1946, then worked as deputy chairman of the Moscow City Collegium lawyers.

They met as if by chance - in the clinic of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and not at our house. Spector always treated me with great sympathy and was well aware of how absurd the charges against me were. When rumors reached him about my condition and that I was practically dying, he developed a plan for his wife to secretly contact me. Mark arranged for her to meet with Volkhonsky, with whom my wife and I once worked in Kharkov at the GPU of Ukraine. Volkhonsky was deputy head of the Main Directorate of Places of Detention, and Butyrka was also under his control. Knowing about my

in critical condition, Volkhonsky suggested the following option: on a predetermined day, when he would receive relatives of prisoners, he would come to his office in Butyrka prison under the pretext that she did not believe the allegations that her husband was alive, and wanted to know why - in violation of all prison rules - the administration of Butyrka requires weekly transfers with gourmet products for him. She really brought, at the insistence of doctors, literally everything except alcoholic beverages.

Volkhonsky urged her to appear at a strictly fixed time, so that he would have the opportunity to call the newly appointed nurse, who is constantly on duty in my cell-ward. This was the same nurse who surprised me, - young, about twenty-five, kind woman.

- And then it depends on you, work with her and turn her over to your side, - admonished Volkhonsky.

The duties of Maria Kuzina, a civilian employee of the medical unit of the prison, included reporting to the authorities about all suspicious contacts of prisoners. They decided that the wife would tell Maria about the slandered Bolshevik, the war hero, and try to win her favor. For his part, Volkhonsky warned his wife that he could spend no more than three or four minutes on this conversation.

Less than a month later, the plan was carried out. At the appointed time, Volkhonsky summoned Maria, who was on duty, and in the presence of the wife of one of the prisoners, as he put it, asked him to report on his state of health. My wife began to beg my sister to help me and do everything possible for my treatment. She said that she was talking about a man who risked his life more than once during the war years, when he carried out underground work against the Germans. She appealed to both Kuzina and Volkhonsky to save my life so that I could be brought before a court that would fairly decide my fate. Of course, the whole conversation was recorded on tape and then got into my prison file, but it was not supposed to attract the attention of the prosecutor's office.

After Volkhonsky confirmed that Maria was deeply moved by my fate, my wife got hold of her phone and managed to establish a trusting relationship with her. She did her best to thank this kind-hearted woman by helping her financially. We maintained friendly relations with her even after my release.

In prison, I never talked to Maria - she only gently squeezed my hand, showing that in the newspaper wrapper on the next book I would find the information I needed for the day.

This went on for about six months, but suddenly they put me on a stretcher and took me to the railway station in a special medical car under guard. It was the winter of 1955. About a year and a half has passed since my arrest.

Two armed escorts in civilian clothes carried me into a docked car. But where did the train go? I didn't know this. However, although it was night, I managed to read the sign on the car: "Moscow - Leningrad."

Maria and I were in the compartment. Immediately after the train left, the guards locked the door and left, saying that they would come in half an hour. I lie on the bottom stick, and Maria on the top one. Without saying a word, she handed me a book wrapped in Pravda with the same article about the execution of Abakumov's group. The article also spoke about the release of Malenkov from the post of head of government, Bulganin was appointed instead. This information was especially important to me.

My mood lifted. Now that Malenkov was removed, there was a faint hope that I could somehow turn this situation to my advantage. Since I was sure that the compartment was being tapped, I did not comment on the article in any way and did not even try to speak to Maria, who again, as usual, gently squeezed my hand. Soon the guards returned drunk, and I, exhausted by the tension and uncertainty of my position, fell asleep like a log.

At the Moscow railway station in Leningrad, we were met by an ambulance and I

was taken to the infamous "Crosses" - a prison, which in tsarist times was used for pre-trial detention. One wing of the prison was turned into a psychiatric hospital. Formalities were strictly observed here. I was examined by the chief psychiatrist, Lieutenant Colonel of the Medical Service Petrov, who later oversaw the "medical treatment" of dissident human rights activist Vladimir Bukovsky. And in my time, the prison was filled not only with ordinary criminals, but also with political prisoners, some of whom had been here for more than fifteen years.

Petrov, it seemed, was quite satisfied with the examination and placed me in the ward together with General Sumbatov, head of the economic department of state security, and Sarkisov, head of Beria's bodyguard. I understood that the ward was being tapped. Both of my neighbors seemed to me mentally ill people. Sarkisov, once a textile factory worker in Tbilisi, complained all the time that false accusations of treason against him were disrupting the urgent implementation of the five-year plan in the textile industry. He asked the doctors to help him expose the prosecutor Rudenko, who prevents the introduction of the machine he invented and the increase in textile production, thereby preventing him from receiving the title of Hero of Socialist Labor.

Sumbatov sat on the bed, crying and shouting. From incoherent separate words, one could understand that Beria's treasures were buried at the dacha of the Council of Ministers in Zhukovka near Moscow, and not smuggled abroad. Soon his cries became even louder. At first I thought it was a reaction to the injections, but when he died, we found out that he had cancer and was in unbearable pain.

In "Crosses" I became an invalid. There I had a spinal puncture for the second time and seriously injured my spine. I lost consciousness, and only intravenous nutrition brought me back to life.

I stayed at Kresty for a week when my wife arrived in Leningrad. This saved me, as she managed to call on the help of many of our friends, former employees of the Leningrad MGB. Krimker's wife's uncle, a charming man of extraordinary ability, helped most of all. Having changed more than one profession in his life, he achieved amazing results in each. He began his career as a loader in the port of Odessa, then became an illegal GPU, first in Romania, then in Argentina, where his relatives lived, and from the mid-50s he switched to large-scale economic work in Leningrad, then at one time he was the commercial director of Lenfilm. His inventive mind came up with a special liquid feeding diet and provided me with regular transfers to the ward, and in order to provide me with information, the wife and Krimker came up with an allusive form for me to receive information. The reception was the same: the book in the hands of the nurse was wrapped in letters supposedly addressed to her by a relative.

So the wife let me know that the "old man" (Stalin) was exposed at the general meeting of the "collective farmers" (XX Party Congress), the "accountants" (those who were arrested with me) were not feeling well, the conditions on the "farm" were the same the most, but she has enough money and connections to continue everything and further. I was confused by the phrase: "no one knows when Lev Semenovitch will be cured of tuberculosis." It turned out that the letter was about a real person: Lev Semyonovich Rapoport, the conductor of the Akimov Theater. He rented a room to the children of my nurse, who came to study in Leningrad from the countryside. This was done as a precaution, in case the letter was intercepted. Then it would be easy to prove that a person really exists. I thought that Lev Semenovitch was my encrypted name and that the authorities considered me as really sick and, therefore, I had to stay in the hospital and continue to play for time.

Regular injections of chlorpromazine made me depressed, and my mood often changed. There was no meeting with his wife until the end of 1957. The prosecutor's office, trying to close my case, allowed visits. In December, my wife and I saw each other seven times. Investigator Tsaregradsky and two doctors were present at each meeting. I didn't say a word, but on the second date, I couldn't hold back my tears. The wife said that with children everything is in

everyone in the family is healthy. I also learned that Reichmann had been amnestied, Eitingon had been sentenced to twelve years, that no one believed in my guilt, that old friends still supported her, and that I should start eating. I didn't answer her. I thought we were allowed dates to get me out of my stupor.

After a month, however, I began to eat solid food, although my front teeth were broken from prolonged force-feeding. I started to get better and answer simple questions. The conditions of my detention immediately improved - I began to receive a soldier's ration instead of a prison one. In addition, I also had transmissions from home. In April 1958, Lieutenant Colonel Petrov announced that, based on my state of health, the investigation could be resumed. In the prison "funnel" I was brought to the station and placed in a wagon in which prisoners are transported. In Moscow, I again found myself in the familiar Butyrka prison.

I immediately felt how the political situation in the country had changed dramatically. Two or three days later, several guards and the head of the prison corps visited me - former officers and soldiers of the Special Purpose Brigade, which was under my command during the war years. They came to greet and cheer me up, openly scolded Khrushchev for abolishing the additional payment for military ranks in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and thereby putting them in the position of second-class people compared to the soldiers of the Soviet Army and the KGB. They also resented the fact that Khrushchev had delayed for twenty years the payment of government bonds, to which we were all required to subscribe for ten to twenty percent of our wages. I did not know what to answer them, but I thanked them for their moral support and for the opportunity to shave myself - for the first time in five years.

COURT, PRISON, FIGHT FOR REHABILITATION

The interrogations began again. This time, Tsaregradsky was no longer in charge of my case (later I was told that he had been fired from the prosecutor's office on suspicion of bribery). Tsaregradsky was replaced by special assistant Rudenko Preobrazhensky, who worked in the Parsi with the senior investigator Andreev. Preobrazhensky was over fifty, he walked on crutches, which was reflected in his character - skiing and closed. By the way, he entered the history of the struggle between the authorities and the intelligentsia by preparing a note to the Central Committee for Rudenko that Boris Pasternak allegedly behaved cowardly during interrogations. Preobrazhensky's sullenness was in striking contrast to Andreev's demeanor. Andreev was younger, always neatly dressed, ironic and often allowed himself jokes about the charges against me. He recorded the interrogation without distorting my answers, and I felt that he began to sympathize with me after he found out that I had nothing to do with the murder of Mikhoels, as well as with experiments on people sentenced to death, carried out by employees of the toxicological laboratory. The essence of my case, according to Andreev, was clear, but I still could not avoid a long prison term, given the attitude of the top leadership towards the people who worked with Beria. He suggested that they give me fifteen years.

Preobrazhensky, meanwhile, prepared falsified protocols of interrogations, but I refused to sign them and crossed out all the false accusations that he incriminated me. Then Preobrazhensky tried to blackmail me, saying that he would add a new accusation - a simulation of insanity, to which I calmly replied:

"Please, but you will have to cancel the two reports of the medical commission confirming that I was in a coma and completely unsuitable for interrogation.

In turn, I accused Tsaregradsky and Rudenko of having brought me, by depriving me of sleep for more than three months and confining me in a windowless cell, to a state from which it was impossible to get out without long-term treatment.

Preobrazhensky tried all the time to beat confessions out of me, but I did not give in. In the end, he announced: "The investigation into your case is over." And here in the first - and

the only one! - since they gave me all four volumes of my investigative file. The indictment was two pages long. Reading it, I was convinced that Andreev kept his word - due to the lack of any evidence, the charge that I tried to participate in the seizure of power in collusion with Beria was dropped. The accusations that I thwarted the assassination attempt on the life of Marshal Tito and in 1947-1948 concealed the information I had about a conspiracy he was preparing against our country were also dropped. My case no longer featured Beria's fantastic plans to escape to the West from a special military air base near Murmansk with the assistance of General Shtemenko. There was no mention of Mairanovsky as my relative. Nevertheless, the indictment presented me as an inveterate villain who, since 1938, was in cahoots with the enemies of the people and opposed the party and the government. For evidence, they used accusations against intelligence officers who were released from prison at the beginning of the war at my insistence, and my connections with "enemies of the people" -

Spiegelglas, Serebryansky, Mali and others, although all of them, except Serebryansky, had already been rehabilitated posthumously by that time. From the point of view of the law, these charges lost their legal force, but this circumstance did not bother anyone.

Three of the original accusations remained: the first was a secret conspiracy with Beria to achieve a separate peace with the Nazis. Germany in 1941 and the overthrow of the Soviet government; secondly, as a man of Beria and the head of a special group created before the war, I carried out secret murders of people hostile to Beria with the help of poison, passing off their deaths as accidents;

third - from 1942 to 1946, I watched the work of "Laboratory-X" - a special chamber where the effect of poisons on prisoners sentenced to death was tested.

The indictment did not name a single specific case of killing people. But my deputy Eitingon was mentioned, who was arrested in October 1951, "wrongly and criminally" released by Beria after Stalin's death in March 1953 and again convicted on the same charge - treason - in 1957.

The indictment ended with a motion to hear my case in closed procedure by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court without the participation of the prosecutor and the defense.

I recalled how my wife, during a meeting in Kresty, spoke about Raikhman and mentioned that the practice of closed trials without the participation of a defense, introduced after the murder of Kirov, has been prohibited by law since 1956. Reichman managed to avoid a secret trial and was therefore amnestied. I had a difficult task ahead of me; How can I tell Preobrazhensky that I know about the law that prohibits hearing cases without a lawyer? After all, I was in a coma.

Then I turned to Preobrazhensky with a written request to motivate why a proposal was made to hear the case without the participation of a defense lawyer. He replied that the indictment did not need to go into such small details, and announced to me, against signature, the decision to refuse to provide a lawyer. I demanded the Code of Criminal Procedure so that the constitutional right to defense could be exercised, but this petition was also rejected by Preobrazhensky, also on receipt. It was very important for me to record in writing a deliberate violation of the law. Andreev, who was sympathetic towards me, said that it would be naive of me to expect that a lawyer would be allowed to take part in my case.

After that, I turned to the deputy head of the prison, my former subordinate during the war years, with a request to provide me with the Code of Criminal Procedure. The warden said that my application was denied, but the deputy head of the prison was ready to receive me and listen to my complaints regarding the conditions of detention in the prison. When I was taken to his office, which, of course, was bugged, we did not betray in any way that we knew each other. He confirmed that my application was rejected, but said that I could read the instructions on the conditions for detainees in prison,

before writing a formal complaint. I caught a special meaning in his phrase. On the table next to the instruction was an appendix, which contained exactly what I was interested in - the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of April 30, 1956 on the abolition of the special procedure for a closed trial in cases of high treason without the participation of the defense.

My official application for the provision of a lawyer was ignored, most likely by order of the "instances", that is, Khrushchev himself, who by that time had become the head of both the party and the government. I decided to wait a while and repeat my demand for counsel during the course of the trial itself.

The last meeting with the investigator ended for me in an unexpected turn. Preobrazhensky suddenly demanded that I write about Molotov's participation in Stamenov's probing. This puzzled me greatly, and I realized that Molotov must now be out of favor. I knew nothing about the "anti-Party group" removed from the leadership in 1957, which included Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich. Preobrazhensky was clearly impressed by my note, especially by the information that Molotov had given Stamenov's wife a job at the Institute of Biochemistry of the USSR Academy of Sciences under Academician Bach. I also recalled that Molotov was consulted about the gifts that Stamenov presented to the royal family in his homeland. The reaction of the investigator strengthened my hope that, despite the closed session, I would be allowed to live as a witness against Molotov.

Thirty-three - that was the number of my statements sent to Khrushchev, Rudenko, Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Gorkin, Serov, who became the chairman of the KGB, and others demanding that I be provided with a defense lawyer and protesting about the gross falsifications contained in the charges against me. I did not receive a response to any of them.

Usually, when a high-level investigation of particularly important cases was completed, the case was immediately transferred to the Supreme Court. Within a week, or at most a month, I should have received notice of when the hearing would take place. But three months passed and not a word. Only at the beginning of September 1958 was I officially informed that my case would be considered by the Military Collegium on September 12 without the participation of the prosecutor and the defense. I was transferred to the Lubyanka inner prison and then to Lefortovo. Many years later, I learned that Major General Borisoglebsky, chairman of the Military Collegium, had sent my case to the prosecutor's office three times for additional investigation. And three times the case was returned with a refusal.

Now it seems to me that my fate was predetermined, but no one wanted to take responsibility for breaking the law during the period of broadcast assurances of legality following the death of Stalin and Khrushchev's revelations of his crimes at the 20th Party Congress. Later, I learned that my appeals to Serov and Khrushchev, in which I referred to our meetings in the Kremlin and operational cooperation during the war years and after it, caused a quick reaction. My former subordinate Colonel Aleksakhin was immediately sent to the prosecutor's office to seize all the operational materials from my case concerning Khrushchev's participation in covert operations against Ukrainian nationalists. The prosecutor's office assured him that there were no references to Khrushchev in any of the four volumes of my criminal case.

Colonel Aleksakhin was an experienced intelligence officer, and when he was shown the indictment against me, he bluntly told the military prosecutor that the charges were vague and falsified. The junior investigator officers agreed with him, but said that orders were not discussed, but carried out - they came from above.

Aleksakhin took three sealed envelopes from the prosecutor's office with unseen operational materials seized from my office safe during a search in 1953. He gave the envelopes to Serov's secretariat and never saw them again. I can't remember everything that was in my safe, but I know for sure that there were records of the sanctions of the then top leadership - Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov, Khrushchev and Bulganin -

on the liquidation of objectionable persons and, in addition, records on undercover cases of our intelligence about the penetration through Zionist circles into government spheres and among scientists engaged in research on atomic energy.

Later, in 1988, when Aleksakhin and two intelligence veterans petitioned for a review of my case, they referred to this episode. And they advised to keep silent and not to compromise the party even more, pulling unseemly steel into the light of God affairs.

I was brought to the building of the Supreme Court on Vorovskogo Street in a prison car. I was not handcuffed, and the KGB escorts who accompanied me were ordered to wait in the reception room of the Deputy Chairman of the Military Collegium, that is, outside the courtroom. They were not allowed to enter the hall contrary to the accepted procedure. I was in civilian clothes. The room I entered didn't look like a courtroom at all. It was a well-furnished office with a desk in the corner and a long conference table, headed by Major General Kostromin, who introduced himself as deputy chairman of the Military Collegium. The other judges were Colonel of Justice Romanov and Vice Admiral Simonov. Two secretaries were also present in the room - one of them, Major Afanasiev, was later secretary at the Penkovsky trial.

I sat at the end of a long table, and at the other end were the judges - all three. The meeting was opened by Kostromin, announcing the names and surnames of the judges and asking if I would have any objections and challenges regarding the composition of the court. I replied that I had no objections or recusals, but that I was protesting against the very closed session and the gross violation of my constitutional rights to provide me with protection. I said that the law forbids closed hearings without the participation of a criminal defense counsel, where, in accordance with the Criminal Code, it can be the application of capital punishment - the death penalty, and because of the serious illness that I have suffered, I cannot competently carry out my own defense in court.

Kostromin was dumbfounded by this statement. The judges looked anxiously at the chairman, the admiral seemed especially worried. Kostromin announced that the court was leaving for a deliberation to consider my petition, and indignantly remarked that I had no right to challenge the procedural form of the hearing. He immediately asked the secretary to escort me to the reception.

The judges deliberated for about an hour, during which time I unexpectedly managed to see those who were supposed to testify against me as witnesses. Academician Muromtsev, who previously headed the bacteriological laboratory of the NKVD-MGB, where they tested bacteriological agents on those sentenced to death until 1950, was the first to appear in the waiting room. I barely knew him and never worked with him, except for the fact that I sent him intelligence materials obtained in the West, according to the latest developments in the field of bacteriological weapons. Mairanovsky was another witness: pale and frightened, he appeared in the waiting room, accompanied by an escort. He was wearing a worn suit - it was immediately obvious that he had been brought straight from prison. It became clear to me that the work of the toxicological "Laboratory-X" would be one of the main charges in my case.

Seeing me, Mairanovsky burst into tears. He obviously did not expect to find me in the waiting room, without an escort, sitting in an armchair in a good suit and tie. The secretary immediately ordered the convoy to withdraw Mairanovsky and ran to report to Kostromin. He quickly returned and led me back to the office, where the judges were already waiting to continue the session. Kostromin announced that my application for the provision of a defense lawyer and the statement about the illegality of the hearing of the case in a closed session without the participation of a lawyer was personally rejected by the chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR. This order has just been received by the government telephone. In the event that I persist and refuse to answer the court's questions, the hearing will continue without me. The Supreme Court, he

the highest court has the right to establish any procedure for hearing cases of particular importance to the interests of the state. He asked me if I plead guilty. I categorically denied all the accusations against me. Then he announced that two witnesses, former members of the state security agencies Galiguzov and Iudin, could not attend the court session for health reasons. Two others, academician Muromtsev and convicted Mairanovsky, are in the next room and are ready to

give evidence.

Kostromin further stated: the court was not convinced by Beria's testimony during the preliminary investigation of his case that you were not his confidant, but only carried out orders that he transmitted on behalf of the government. Moreover, Kostromin said, the court believes that Beria was trying to hide the fact of high treason, and the evidence available in your investigative file does not matter to the court.

The episode with Stamenov was only mentioned. Kostromin emphasized the fact of undoubted treason, adding that new data indicating that Beria discussed the issue of contacts with Stamenov and other members of the government would be reported to the Supreme Court and, possibly, a private ruling would be issued to government authorities. I emphatically denied that I had made any attempts to establish secret contacts bypassing the government, since Molotov not only knew about these contacts, but also sanctioned them, and a government-sanctioned sounding for intelligence purposes cannot be classified as a fact of treason. However, my application was ignored by the court. Moreover, I said, Comrade Khrushchev personally assured me five years ago, on August 5, 1953, that he did not find any criminal violation of the law in my actions or guilt in the episode with Stamenov.

Turning pale, the chairman forbade me to mention Khrushchev's name. The secretaries immediately stopped taking minutes. I felt the blood rush to my face and, unable to restrain myself, shouted out:

- You are trying a man sentenced to death by the fascist OUN, a man who risked his life for the sake of the Soviet people! You judge me in the same way as your predecessors, who brought the heroes of Soviet intelligence under execution.

I began to list the names of my dead friends and colleagues - Arguzov, Shpigelglas, Mali, Sersbryansky, Sosnovsky, Gorozhanin and others. Kostromin was stunned; Vice Admiral Simonov sat as pale as chalk.

After a short pause, Kostromin pulled himself together and said:

- No one has sentenced you to death in advance. We want to establish the truth.

Then the witness Muromtsev was called and, in his presence, the testimony he had given five years ago was read out. To the surprise and displeasure of the judges, Muromtsev stated, "He cannot confirm his previous testimony. According to him, he does not remember any facts of my involvement in the work of a secret bacteriological research laboratory.

Then Mairanovsky was called. He testified that he had advised me on four occasions. With the chairman's permission, I asked him if he was subordinate to me on the job, were the four cases he mentioned human experiments or military operations, and finally, from whom did he receive orders to use poisons? To my surprise, the admiral supported me. And the whole well-thought-out scenario of the trial crumbled. Mairanovsky testified that he had never been subordinate to me at work and began to cry. Through tears, he admitted that the experiments in question were actually military operations, and Khrushchev and Molotov gave orders to destroy people. He told how he met with Molotov in the building of the Committee of Information, and then, arousing the wrath of the chairman of the court, mentioned a meeting with Khrushchev in a railway car in Kyiv. Here Kostromin interrupted him, saying that his testimony was already clear to the court. After that, he pressed the button, and the escort that appeared took Mairanovsky away. I did not see him for three years after that, until the day when we met on a walk in the courtyard of the Vladimir prison.

The judges were clearly confused. They received confirmation that the so-called

terrorist acts were actually military operations carried out against the worst opponents of Soviet power on the direct orders of the government, and not on my initiative. I also pointed out that I was not a senior official in the performance of these operations, since in each case special representatives of the government were present - the First Deputy Minister of State Security of the USSR Ogoltsov and the Minister of State Security of Ukraine Savchenko, and local state security bodies reported directly to them. I offered to call them as witnesses and demanded to know why they were not held accountable for their leadership.

these shares.

And again, the judges felt out of place. I knew that in the protocols of my interrogations, all references to work during the Cold War period of 1946-1953 were extremely vague and vague. The thought that ran like a red thread through all the accusations boiled down to the following: Mairanovsky, with my help, killed people who were hostile to Beria. I quite clearly felt that the judges were ready to admit the greasy fact that all these liquidations were sanctioned by leaders who were higher than Beria in the table of ranks, and he did not at all

had a relationship.

Kostromin quickly and efficiently summed up the court session. According to him, I am not on trial for these operations against the enemies of Soviet power. The court believes that I directed other covert operations at my dacha against Beria's enemies. I immediately asked for at least one concrete fact of a terrorist act with my participation against the government or Beria's enemies. Kostromin objected harshly: the case of Beria was closed, and it was precisely established that such actions were committed more than once, and since I worked under him, I am also guilty. However, the court at the moment does not yet have the relevant evidence in this regard. With these words, he closed the hearing, giving me the opportunity to make my final statement. I was KimoK and declared my innocence and that the reprisal against me is taking place in the interests of the Ukrainian fascists, imperialist secret services and Trotskyists abroad. And finally, I demanded to exercise my legal right to familiarize myself with the minutes of the court session, to make my comments in it. This was immediately denied to me.

Kostromin announced a break. I was taken to the waiting room, where they offered tea and sandwiches. The admiral came up to me, shook hands and said that I behaved like a man should. He reassured me that everything will be fine. After some time, I was taken back to Kostromin's office for the reading of the verdict. The judges stood up, and the presiding judge read out the handwritten verdict, which exactly repeated the indictment of the prosecutor's office with one addition: "The court does not consider it appropriate to apply capital punishment to me - the death penalty and bases its verdict on the materials available in the case, but not considered at the trial."

I was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. The verdict was final and not subject to appeal. It was autumn 1958. Since my arrest in 1953, I have already spent five years in prison.

The strength has left me. I could not get out of a state of shock, I felt that I was about to faint, and I had to sit down. Soon I was already in the inner prison of Lubyanka. I got a terrible headache, and the warden even gave me a pill. I still did not come to my senses when I was unexpectedly taken to Serov's office - the former possessions of Beria. Glancing at me gloomily, Serov offered to sit down.

"Listen carefully," he began. "You will have plenty of time to consider your position. You will be sent to Vladimir Prison. And if there you remember any suspicious actions or criminal orders by Molotov and Malenkov, connected with certain cases inside the country or abroad, let me know, but do not mention Nikita Sergeevich. And if," he concluded, "you remember what I told you

said you will stay alive and we will grant you amnesty.

Despite the terrible headache, I nodded in agreement. I never again didn't see him.

I was immediately transferred to the Lefortovo prison, and two days later I was allowed to see my wife and younger brother Konstantin. Finally, I gave vent to tears, and they comforted me as best they could. The news that I would be in the Vladimir prison caused a hidden joy: my wife's younger sister lived in this city, her husband Alexander Komelkov was a responsible officer of the apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Vladimir Region, deputy head of the traffic police. They lived in the same house as all the prison authorities, including senior guards. Komelkov and his wife were on excellent terms with all their neighbors. Soon my youngest son Anatoly came to Vladimir for the summer holidays. There he became friends with Yuri, a boy of his age, the son of the head of the Vladimir prison, Colonel Kozik. With them in the company was Olga, the daughter of Kozik's deputy, who lived next door.

Zhenya was lucky that she was not arrested when I was under investigation, like the wives of other officials involved in the Beria case. She prudently interrupted acquaintances with former colleagues. As for our friends who are not connected with the authorities, they were very supportive of us, especially Marianna Yaroslavskaya. Her father, Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, was the party's Central Committee secretary from the 1920s to the 1940s. Informally, Yaroslavsky was considered the ideologist of the party. I met him and his charming wife, an old revolutionary, in 1943, when I got a dacha near his house. Acquaintance with the Yaroslavsky family played a big role in my life and helped the family survive. Through Marianne, the wife made friends among sculptors, painters, and writers. After Yaroslavsky's death, I attended to his family and widow Claudia Ivanovna Kirsanova. She, in turn, introduced me to the secretary of the Central Committee of the party, Kuznetsov, who supported me in the conflict with Abakumov. Anna Tsukanova, who was transferred by Suslov after the fall of Malenkov from the Central Committee to the post of Deputy Minister of Culture of the RSFSR for Personnel, provided us with great moral support and assistance. It was Anna who advised her wife to pretend that she did not know what her husband was accused of. Therefore, her petitions for a fair consideration of my case, which she sent to Khrushchev and Malenkov, always began with assurances that she did not know the essence of the charges against me. She made copies of my letters from abroad, in which I wrote to her that, despite the dangers that surround me, I am ready to sacrifice my life for the cause of the party and the people. She sent these letters to Khrushchev and Malenkov to prove that a person who was completely devoted to the ideals of the party was being held under arrest. My wife collected testimonials about me from thirteen of my former colleagues, of whom five were Heroes of the Soviet Union, certified by their party committees, and sent them to the prosecutor's office and the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court with a request that these people be called as witnesses in my case. When I found out about this, I understood the indecisiveness of the judges and why my investigator Andreev was sympathetic towards me and, contrary to the rules, avoided signing the indictment in my case.

Two circumstances related to the Beria case, in a certain way, slowed down the search for compromising evidence on the family members of those arrested. And although Beria's daughter-in-law, the granddaughter of Maxim Gorky, who at that time was in high esteem, divorced her husband after he and his mother were arrested and then exiled, this family connection was extremely inconvenient for the authorities. The second circumstance was connected with the case of Sukhanov, the head of the secretariat Malenkov in the Presidium of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers, who took an active part in the arrest of Beria. The top leadership was literally shocked by the report that Sukhanov had stolen from the safes of Beria and his employees a gold watch - and there were eight of them - bonds and a large sum of money, including part of Beria's award for leading the work on the creation of an atomic bomb.

In 1956-1958, there were rumors in the highest circles of the capital about mysterious thefts,

connected with the arrest of Beria, and where the traces of these crimes lead. The safes of Beria and his staff were, of course, opened immediately after the arrests. According to the law, it was supposed to draw up a detailed inventory of the confiscated items. However, the military prosecutor Uspensky and Sukhanov, who were assisted by Puzanov (the head of the department of the Central Committee of the party and the future ambassador of the USSR in Bulgaria), did not draw up any inventory.

The wife of one of the arrested employees of the Beria apparatus, Ordynstev, imprisoned and then released, but expelled from work and deprived of her livelihood, had a list of bond numbers that belonged to her husband and were kept in a safe at his work. Sukhanov demanded that a clause on confiscation of property be included in the court verdict in the Ordynstev case. But since he was not a state security officer, did not have a military rank and was not accused of high treason (he was only charged with non-information about Beria's criminal intentions), the court did not include a confiscation clause in the verdict. Then Ordynstev's wife began to seek the return of the bonds through the court. At first, her requests received no response, but then Khrushchev ordered Serov to look for these bonds. At this time, some woman presented in the savings bank for payment one of the missing sticky ones, on which the winnings fell. She was detained. She turned out to be a typist who worked for Sukhanov.

Sukhanov was forced to confess to stealing valuables from the safes of Beria and his subordinates, for which he was sentenced to ten years in prison. All of Moscow was talking about this scandal, although there were no official reports. He undermined the confidence in the investigators who were involved in the Beria case, and even interest in exposing all sorts of dirty intrigues that were attributed to him began to fall.

The position of my wife at this time improved markedly. Fearing that her pension would be taken away, she learned to sew, and soon, as a dressmaker, she became popular with her new friends from the art world, which brought her additional income. And when Khrushchev cut military pensions, she was still able to support her children and her mother. The Ministry of Internal Affairs tried to take away our apartment in the center of Moscow, but could not do it legally, since my wife was a participant in the war and received a military pension. Anna Tsukanova supported her wife in her lawsuit with the HOZU of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Their tactics were simple: I have not yet been convicted, I am in the prison hospital and therefore cannot be discharged. Then HOZU went for a sharp increase in rent, but, fortunately, the wife was able to pay the bills without much difficulty.

In 1956-1957, it became clear to her that the purge in the state security organs, of which Beria and I became victims, was over. Witnesses who knew too much were shot, including falsifiers of criminal cases.

Raikhman, thanks to the intervention of his wife, who had connections in the Kremlin, was accused only of abuse of power and was soon amnestied. Maisky was also released from prison. The wife learned that Khrushchev had ordered about a hundred retired generals and colonels of the KGB-MVD to be expelled from the party and stripped of their military ranks from among those who, in the 1930s, while occupying leadership positions, took an active part in repressions or knew too much about inner-party intrigues. Unlike past years, all these people, having lost large pensions and party cards, nevertheless remained alive - they were not shot, they were not imprisoned. Among them were two who distinguished themselves in matters of atomic intelligence: Major General Ovakimyan, who coordinated the work of the NKVD in the United States in 1941-1945 to collect information about the atomic bomb, and my deputy Vasilevsky, the only accusation against which was his allegedly too close connection with Beria .

The mood in Moscow was clearly changing, and this, in particular, was evidenced by the fact that Vasilevsky managed to restore himself in the party. He used his past connections with Bruno Pontecorvo, who at that time was in Moscow and became an academician. Pontecorvo personally asked Khrushchev for his friend. Vasilevsky and Gorsky, who proved themselves in the line of "atomic" intelligence, took up the translation of adventure novels from English and

French. Some former state security officers - with the support of Ilyin, who after rehabilitation in 1954 became the organizing secretary of the Moscow branch of the Writers' Union of the USSR - became writers and journalists. Although rehabilitation gave the right to be reinstated in his former position, in practice this turned out to be impossible. But still, people were allowed to start a new life and receive a higher pension.

Fortunately, my stay in the Vladimir prison coincided with a brief period of liberalization of the penitentiary system under Khrushchev. So, I was allowed to receive up to four food parcels every month. And although at first I often lost consciousness and felt severe dizziness due to terrible headaches, little by little my strength began to return to me. True, they kept me in solitary confinement, but still I was not completely isolated - I had access to newspapers, I could listen to the radio, use the prison library.

The Vladimir prison was remarkable from many points of view. Built under Nicholas II at the beginning of this century, it was used as a place of detention for the most dangerous criminals from the point of view of the state, whom the authorities always needed to have at hand. In fact, the Vladimir prison performed the same role under the Soviet regime, and prisoners from there were often taken to the capital for additional interrogations. Ironically, I was placed in the second building of the prison, which I had previously visited twice to talk with captured German generals who were serving their terms here. At that time, they showed me the remaining unoccupied prison cell, in which the future hero of the revolution and civil war, one of the organizers of the Red Army, Mikhail Frunze, was imprisoned.

In my time, the prison consisted of three main buildings, which contained about five hundred prisoners. After 1960, the prison was expanded, and now in three rebuilt buildings there could be up to eight hundred people. The prison regime is strict. Everyone got up at six in the morning. Food was distributed to the cells: the meager food was passed through a small window cut in the heavy metal door of the cell. Hunger was our constant companion, it was enough to look into the dull eyes of the prisoners to be convinced of this. At first, the bed was raised against the wall and locked with a padlock, so that it was impossible to lie down during the day. One could sit on a chair screwed to the cement floor of the cell. On the day we were allowed to walk from half an hour to forty-five minutes in the so-called "box" - a courtyard with high walls, which rather resembled a room with an area of about twenty meters, only without a ceiling. The presence of a guard was mandatory. For daytime rest, only one hour was supposed after dinner, when the warden unlocked the bed. There was no toilet in the cell - it was replaced by a bucket. Every time a prisoner had to go to the lavatory, he had to turn to the guard. (They say that toilets have now appeared in the cells of the Vladimir prison.) And although it was allowed to sleep from ten o'clock in the evening, the light was on all night.

After several days of confinement, I began to notice a sympathetic attitude towards myself from the prison administration. I was transferred from solitary confinement to the prison hospital, where they gave me a glass of milk a day and, more importantly, allowed me to lie in bed during the day for as long as I wanted.

Pretty soon I discovered that there were quite a few people with me in the prison that I knew well. For example, Munters, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia. In 1940, after the coup in Latvia, I took him to Voronezh, where he began teaching at the local university. Or Shulgin, for whom the NKVD intelligence hunted abroad for twenty years. After the capture of Belgrade by our troops in 1945, the former deputy chairman of the State Duma was arrested, taken to the Soviet Union and put on trial for anti-Soviet activities during the civil war and in subsequent years.

Three or four cells away from me was a certain Vasiliev: in fact, it was Stalin's son, Vasily, who even here, in prison, managed to make scandals. Once, when his wife, the daughter of Marshal Timoshenko, came to visit him, he attacked

at her with fists, demanding that she immediately turn to Khrushchev and Voroshilov with a request for his release.

Mairanovsky, who had been in prison since 1953, was also in the Vladimir prison - I already said that they gave him ten years. He was hardly recognizable: it seemed that only a shell remained of the former Mairanovsky. In order to survive and escape from prison beatings, he, broken and vainly hoping for release, agreed to testify against Beria, Merkulov and Abakumov, testifying to their participation in secret murders. True, he could not name any victims. All three - Beria, Merkulov and Abakumov - were shot, and Mairanovsky continued to serve time, sometimes he was interrogated by state security and prosecutors as a witness in cases of interest to them.

When my case was heard at the court session, he testified that he had never received orders from me either to carry out experiments with poisons on living people, or to destroy them, and was not in my subordination at all. I am grateful to him for this, as well as for the extremely dangerous work that this man did during the war years. Disarming the terrorists was an extremely dangerous undertaking. They were paratroopers who had come to the safe house, which aroused no suspicion in them. While the Abwehr agents sedated by Mairanovsky with the help of medicines were "turned off", he managed to replace the poison ampoules sewn into the collar so that later, when these agents were arrested, they could not commit suicide.

Sometimes we met on a walk in the prison yard, and if there was an opportunity to exchange a few words, I advised him to seek support among medical scientists whom he personally knew and who highly appreciated him. Mairanovsky was released in December 1961, and Blokhin, president of the Academy of Medical Sciences, petitioned for his rehabilitation.

Two days after Mairanovsky visited Khrushchev's reception room in the building of the Central Committee of the party and filed a petition for rehabilitation, which mentioned an episode of their meeting in a special train car at the end of 1947 in Kiev, the KGB arrested him again. In his naivety, he did not understand that it was impossible to turn to Khrushchev for help and remind him of their meeting related to the liquidation of Archbishop Romzha in Uzhgorod. He should have kept in mind that Khrushchev, who was in power, would like to erase from his memory everything connected with such cases. Unfortunately, Mairanovsky, who constantly reminded himself of himself, became an unwanted witness. He was immediately stripped of his professorship and all academic degrees and exiled to Makhachkala. In this city, he began to work as the head of a chemical laboratory.

From time to time Mairanovsky visited Academician Blokhin in Moscow, hoping to restore his scientific career. In December 1964, on the eve of another meeting to discuss the results of his experiments with malignant tumors, Mairanovsky mysteriously died. Ironically, the diagnosis was the same as that of Wallenberg and Oggins: heart failure.

An unusual "club" of former high-ranking employees of the NKVD-MVD arose in the Vladimir prison. Among them were Eitingon, who arrived in Vladimir in March 1957 with a twelve-year term, Mamulov, head of Beria's secretariat and deputy minister of the interior, in charge of gold mining. Although Mamulov was an Armenian, at one time he was the personnel secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. His cellmate, also the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, academician Sharia, at one time worked as deputy head of foreign intelligence of the NKVD. After Sharia was released from prison, where he was imprisoned as a Mingrelian nationalist, the academician received a new appointment - assistant to Beria's apparatus in the Council of Ministers, where he was responsible for foreign policy issues, and he fell into the network that was set for Beria - such was his unfortunate fate.

Colonel Ludwigov, head of Beria's secretariat at the Ministry of the Interior,

was arrested because he knew too much about him and his love affairs. Ludwigov was married to Mikoyan's niece, which helped him get out of prison ten days after Khrushchev's fall in 1964. He was pardoned by a special decree of Mikoyan, who had been appointed Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR three months earlier. Mikoyan also granted amnesty to his distant relative Sarkisov, Beria's head of security, who supplied Beria with women.

Darya Gusyak and Maria Didyk, illegal couriers of the Bandera underground, whom I have already mentioned, were captured in 1950 in the Vladimir prison. Sat with us was Vladimir Brik, nephew of Osip Brik, a close friend of Vladimir Mayakovsky, arrested by the KGB while trying to escape to the United States. Maxim Shteinberg, an illegal NKVD resident in Switzerland in the 1930s, was also there. Refusing to return because of the danger of being shot that threatened him, after Stalin's death he fell for the bait of false promises of amnesty and came to Moscow with his wife Elsa. Steinberg received fifteen and she ten years for high treason.

As a mockery, in the verdict of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court in his case, the wording appeared: the court does not consider it necessary to apply capital punishment to him for treason to the Motherland - the death penalty due to the fact that the state did not cause real damage by his actions and he returned the funds allocated him for operational purposes in 1937.

Three months after my arrival in the Vladimir prison, my wife brought the children to see me, having wisely decided not to show them her father until he was in the best physical shape. My hands trembled and I could hardly control myself when she entered. The head of the prison, Colonel Kozik, allowed two additional visits with his wife, in addition to the prescribed one per month. Before his resignation in 1959, he arranged a meeting for me in his office with Alexander, the husband of his sister-in-law, who brought me up to date on what was going on in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the KGB. Information about who is in power and who was dismissed, the initiatives of the new KGB chairman Shelepin to expand Soviet intelligence operations abroad gave me hope that I could be useful to the new leadership due to my great experience and therefore I can be amnestied, and rehabilitate, as happened with the generals and officers released by Stalin and Beria in 1939 and 1941.

Despite my petition to remain in solitary confinement, a year later they put me first Brik, then Steinberg, and later the burgomaster of Smolensk under the Germans Menshagin. Our relationship was polite but aloof. Although they were all interesting people, but their former life and superficial knowledge of our reality annoyed me, so we could not get close.

After a six-month stay in the Vladimir prison, I began to bombard the Supreme Court and the prosecutor's office with petitions to review my case. I knew from my wife that she twice applied to Khrushchev and to the Supreme Court with a request to allow a lawyer to consider my case. But this request was denied to her. She showed me copies of her petitions, and I sent a protest to Moscow, stating that my sentence had no legal force, since I was denied the right to a defense, as well as familiarization with the minutes of the court session, which I never signed. This meant that I was in prison illegally. I received only one reply, signed by Smirnov, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court, stating that there were no grounds for reviewing the case. For the next forty petitions, I received no answer. My cellmates, especially Eitingon, laughed at the legal reasoning behind my motions. "Laws and power struggles," Eitingon told me, "are incompatible."

In 1960, I was unexpectedly summoned to the office of the head of the prison. At the door I ran into Eitingon. In the office, instead of the chief, I saw a tall, stately, imposing, fashionably dressed man in his fifties, who introduced himself as an investigator for

particularly important cases of the Party Control Committee by German Klimov⁸. He said that the Central Committee of the Party had instructed him to study my investigative and personal file from the personnel department of the KGB. The Central Committee is interested in data on Molotov's participation in Beria's secret intelligence operations abroad, and also, most importantly, the names of people whose abduction and murder was organized by Beria inside the country.

Klimov showed me a certificate for the Party Control Committee, signed by Deputy Rudenko Satin. The certificate contained a list of secret murders and kidnappings committed on the orders of Beria. Thus, the prosecutor's office, investigating the case of Beria, established that in 1940-1941 he ordered the liquidation of the former Soviet ambassador to China, Luganets and his wife, as well as Simonich-Kulik, the wife of Marshal of Artillery Kulik, who was shot in 1950 on Stalin's orders.

The prosecutor's office, the memo said, had credible information about other secret murders ordered by Beria both inside and outside the country, but the names of the victims could not be established, because Eitingon and I covered all traces. The certificate also indicated that for a long time the state of health of me and Eitingon did not allow the prosecutor's office to conduct a full investigation of these cases. Klimov, on behalf of the Central Committee of the party, was required to tell the truth about the operations in which I took part, since the prosecutor's office did not have written documents confirming the oral accusations of me in organizing the murder of Mikhoels - this apparently confused Klimov. He was quite surprised when I said that I had absolutely nothing to do with the murder of Mikhoels, and I proved it. He needed to clear up the dark pages of our recent history before the start of the next party congress, which was to be held in 1961, but it seemed to me that he also showed a purely human interest and was sympathetic to my cause.

We talked for more than two hours, leafing through page after page of my investigation file. I did not deny my participation in special actions, but noted that they were considered by the government as top secret military operations against known enemies of the Soviet state and were carried out on the orders of leaders who are now in power. Therefore, the prosecutors refused to record the circumstances of each case in writing, Klimov persistently tried to find out all the details - he was strongly impressed by my statement that the Ministry of State Security had a reporting system for the work of each employee who was related to the toxicological laboratory.

Klimov admitted that I could not give orders to Mairanovsky or receive poisons from him. The regulations on the laboratory, approved by the government and the heads of the NKVD MGB Beria, Merkulov, Abakumov and Ignatiev, prohibited such actions. This document, Klimov said, automatically proves my innocence. If he were in the case, Eitingon and I would not be able to bring such an accusation, but he was in the bowels of the archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the KGB and in the special office of the prosecutor's office.

Reports on the liquidations of persons undesirable to the government in 1946-1951 were compiled by Ogoltsov as a senior official who traveled to the place of their conduct, and by the Minister of State Security of Ukraine Savchenko. They were stored in a special sealed bag. After each operation, the seal was opened, a new handwritten report was added, and the bag was resealed. There was a stamp on the package: "Do not open without the permission of the Minister. Ogoltsov".

While we drank tea with sandwiches, Klimov listened attentively to me and made notes in a notebook.

Klimov spent several days in the Vladimir prison. By his order, I

the camera was given a typewriter so that I could type the answers to all his questions. They covered the history of intelligence operations, the details of the instructions given by Beria, Abakumov, Ignatiev, Kruglov, Malenkov and Molotov, as well as my participation in underground and sabotage actions against the Germans and the collection of information on the atomic bomb. Finally, at Klimov's suggestion, I printed another application for release and rehabilitation. Considering his advice, I did not mention Khrushchev's name, but pointed out that all orders given to me came from the Central Committee of the party. Klimov assured me that my release was inevitable, as was my reinstatement in the party. He made the same promises to Eitingon.

Later I learned that the interest in my case was twofold. On the one hand, the authorities thus wanted to look deeper into the background of Stalin's crimes and the secrets surrounding his name. On the other hand, the release of Ramon Mercader from a Mexican prison and his arrival in Moscow spurred Dolores Ibarruri and the leaders of the French and Austrian communist parties to seek release from Eitingon prison and me.

Klimov's trip to Vladimir improved his wife's situation in many ways. The recently appointed chairman of the KGB, Shelepin, sent a certificate to the Party Control Committee positively characterizing my activities and Eitingon; it noted that the State Security Committee "does not have any compromising materials against Sudoplatov and Eitingon, indicating that they were involved in the crimes committed by the Beria group." This document contrasted sharply with the information prepared in 1954 by Serov, Sakharov and Korotkov that my unit allegedly did not carry out any useful work after the war. This certificate is still referred to by my ill-wishers from among the historians of Soviet foreign intelligence.

This kind of assessment is immediately a date for experienced people to understand that our rehabilitation is just around the corner.

This coincided in time with attempts by the KGB to make contact with a Jewish family in the United States. This was the same family whose wife helped to leave for America from Western Ukraine, where they ended up after the capture of Warsaw by the Germans in 1939. In 1960, one of their relatives came to Moscow as a tourist and tried to find his wife in Izvestia, because at one time she told them that she worked there. Upon learning of this, the KGB contacted her, hoping to recruit this person to work for Soviet intelligence in America. My wife was asked to come to Lubyanka, where the possibility of using our apartment for meetings with an American tourist was discussed with her several times. True, nothing came of the attempt to recruit him, but the apartment began to be used as a safe house. Now, it seemed that the threat of losing the apartment in the center no longer hung over us.

The ideological department of the KGB became interested in my wife's experience of working with the creative intelligentsia in the 1930s. Former students of the NKVD school, whom she taught the basics of attracting agents, and Lieutenant Colonel Ryabov consulted with her on how to use the popularity, connections and acquaintances of Yevgeny Yevtushenko for operational purposes and in foreign policy propaganda. His wife offered to establish friendly confidential contacts with him, in no case to recruit him as an informant, but to send him, accompanied by Ryabov, to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Finland. After the trip, Yevtushenko became an active supporter of the "new communist ideas" that Khrushchev was implementing.

My wife also helped the son of one of our friends, Boris Zhutovsky, a talented graphic artist who openly criticized Khrushchev's cultural policies. She arranged a meeting between the artist and the KGB to protect him from persecution. He explained to them that his statements had been misinterpreted, and wrote a penitential note to the party bodies and the Union of Artists that

supports the course of the communist party. His note ended up in the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the Party, where they decided that Zhutovsky should continue to receive the support of the young officers from Lubyanka who took care of him.

However, his wife's "flirting" with the KGB soon ended. Prosecutor Rudenko prevented my rehabilitation in every possible way. The house on Markhlewski Street, where we lived in a large apartment, was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Polish trade mission was located there. With the help of Anna Tsukanova, the wife got a nice but much smaller apartment in the VDNH area, at that time on the outskirts of Moscow. Our move, however, did not prevent Mercader and other leaders of foreign communist parties from supporting and visiting his wife. By this time, the children had graduated from high school, and thanks to Zoya Zarubina, the dean of the Institute of Foreign Languages, and the rector, Varvara Pivovarova, they were accepted there to study.

In 1961, my wife and my sons finally gave up the illusion that the authorities would eventually recognize the miscarriage of justice in my case. After Klimov accepted his wife to the Central Committee and told her that both of us, Eitingon and I, were innocent victims in the Beria case and he was seeking a review of our sentences at the highest level, they realized that my fate was in the hands of Khrushchev. It was not in the bureaucratic labyrinths that the matter stalled - the decision to keep me in prison was made at the very top.

Although Klimov spoke more in hints than directly, he nevertheless emphasized that it was necessary to continue petitions for rehabilitation. He said to his wife:

You need to refer to the materials stored in the Central Committee of the CPSU and the KGB. You must insist on conducting a study of the materials at the same time both in the main criminal case and in the "observation" proceedings, because that is where all your petitions, testimonies and documents exposing the falsification are located. - He explained his thought: - Well, for example, the indictment says: Before the war, Sudoplatov created a Special Group under the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs in order to carry out Beria's special assignments. At the same time, from 1942 to 1946, he headed the Directorate for Intelligence and Sabotage, or the 4th Directorate. But in the "observation" file there are excerpts from relevant documents showing that in fact the Special Group and the Directorate for Intelligence and Sabotage were not two different units, but one. It is clear that this fact is in clear contradiction with the statements in the indictment, he summed up.

During our next meeting, my wife told me about the meeting with Klimov. At that moment, Eitingon had just become my cellmate, and we spent long hours together, thinking about how to expedite the passage of our applications. But as time went on, my realistic-minded wife began to push me to start preparing after my release from prison for a new job as an interpreter. Zoya Zarubina gave me and Eitingon a whole pile of books in French, German, Polish and Ukrainian. These were novels and history books. In a word, we did not have to miss him. We spent all day translating. Special moral support during this period was given to us by the deputy head of the prison, Khachikyan. We retained affection for him until his death. It was he who sent copies of our statements to the Central Committee on rehabilitation to the will, which veterans of intelligence and the partisan movement used in their appeals to

XXIII Party Congress for our protection.

In 1961, prison conditions deteriorated sharply: instead of four food parcels per month, only one was allowed, and then one every six months. These restrictions were the result of growing crime in the country, caused primarily by the deteriorating economic situation. In September 1961, on the eve of the 22nd Party Congress, which revealed new details of Stalin's crimes, ten people were secretly tried and shot in the Vladimir prison - the organizers and participants of the hunger riot in the small town of Murom.

Family visits were reduced from once a month to one every half a year, but still every day I received censored letters from my wife. In the prison administration

changes have also taken place - instead of the former friendly-minded people, new ones have appeared, completely unfamiliar to us. In 1962 I suffered a massive heart attack. Soon, due to repairs in the prison, we, high-ranking employees of the NKVD, were placed in the same cell. Disputes and conflicts arose only over the game of chess, but I never took part in them. However, sometimes it was difficult to contain emotions - nerves could not stand it. Once Ludwigov said that he could not imagine Beria as such a villain. On this, Eitingon sarcastically remarked: "Yeah ... You lifted him up and called your children Lawrence." The others smiled wryly.

Usually Eitingon and I, without interfering, listened to their revelations about internal squabbles in the Politburo under Stalin, Beria, Malenkov and Khrushchev. We tactfully did not remind them that, under pressure from the investigators, they all pleaded guilty to "failure to expose Beria as an enemy of the people."

In an effort to draw attention to our petitions for rehabilitation, Eitingon and I wrote a letter to Khrushchev containing operational proposals for countering President Kennedy's newly organized sabotage special forces - the Green Berets. Our letter received an approving assessment from Shelepin, secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, who oversaw issues of state security and intelligence activities. General Fadeikin, my successor as head of the service for sabotage operations abroad in the 1st Main Directorate of the KGB, got acquainted with the letter. He sent Major Vasiliev to Vladimir to discuss organizational details with us, and he brought us two kilograms of sugar as a gift. This is how our initiative led to the birth of special forces in the KGB. A training and sabotage center was created, subordinate to the 1st Main Directorate. Later, his employees, as part of the Alpha group, stormed Amin's palace in Kabul in 1979.

Encouraged by the success of our letter and the moral support of the KGB, Eitingon and I sent a new proposal to Khrushchev to renew contacts with the Kurdish leader Barzani to use against Iraqi dictator General Qasem, who was beginning to emerge from Soviet influence. After that, Colonel Shevchenko, the head of the Vladimir regional department of the KGB, visited us and said that the leadership was using our proposal. This time, in the form of a reward, we received the right to one food transfer not after six months, but after three.

Shevchenko allowed us, and it was very important, to meet for the first time with lawyer Yevgeny Zorin, an old acquaintance of my wife, with whom she worked in the Odessa GPU in the 1920s.

Zorin was the first lawyer who saw the sentences handed down by the Military Collegium to me and Eitingon. They were labeled "Top Secret". According to Zorin, my case was hopeless unless it was reviewed at the highest level. But Zorin saw some opportunity to change Eitingon's sentence because he had been in prison for a year and a half under Stalin. By the way, Raikhman spent half of his term in prison, since a year and a half were credited to him. Zorin believed that in the case of Eitingon, a technical error had been made due to the failure to count these one and a half years, and he filed a petition with the Military Collegium. He hoped directly that, since Kostromin, who chaired would be appointed the meeting at that time, had already died, no one

in an awkward position, admitting that a mistake had been made at one time. Zorin's appeal was rejected, but Zoya Zarubina intervened very successfully and obtained a positive decision from the chairman of the Military Collegium, Lieutenant General Borisoglebsky, in the Eitingon case.

In December 1963, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court determined that Eitingon's sentence should include the year and a half he had spent in prison before Stalin's death. Thus, the total term of his imprisonment was reduced. Shortly before that, Eitingon almost died from a tumor in the intestines. Using her connections, Zoya obtained permission to let the leading oncologist Mints into the prison hospital,

colleague of Eitingon's sister Sonia. It was he who saved Eitingon by performing a brilliant operation on him.

Before the operation, Eitingon wrote to Khrushchev - it was his farewell letter to the party. In it, he asked Khrushchev how he could allow loyal party members known to him personally, whose innocence had been established by the Party Control Committee, who had carried out a vital task for the cause of communism in Mexico, to continue to be held in prison. By that time, Mercader had received the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union for carrying out this operation. (Thirty years later, looking through the archives at my prompting, General Volkogonov discovered this letter from Eitingon.)

In prison, I was visited by Colonel Ivashchenko, deputy head of the KGB investigative department, who came in view of the proposed amnesty for one of the prisoners, the talented mathematician Pimenov. Ivashchenko, whom I knew from my previous job, said that although there is no chance for the current leadership to review our cases, we can definitely say: as soon as the term of imprisonment by a court decision ends, we will be released. Stalin's practice of keeping important witnesses in prison for life or exterminating them seemed to be over.

The first confirmation of this was the release of Academician Sharia - his term ended on June 26, 1963.

He was arrested on the same day as Beria, ten years ago. We agreed that if he was released, he would contact Eitingon's family or mine and say the phrase: "I'm going to start a new life."

We waited impatiently for a signal from him. Despite all the assurances, we still doubted that he would be released and allowed to return home to Tbilisi. Two weeks later, confirmation was received from his wife - Professor Sharia paid her a short visit. She remembered him from the NKVD school, then he was a personable, self-confident professor of philosophy. Now she saw a deep old man. However, Sharia remained until the end of his days in his right mind and memory and studied philosophy at the Georgian Academy of Sciences. He died in 1983.

In 1964, Eitingon was released, and he began working as a senior editor at the Foreign Literature Publishing House. After Khrushchev's resignation, Ludwigov was released. He got a job at the Inspectorate of the Central Statistical Bureau. My wife hoped that I would also be released early, but her request was immediately denied.

Mamulov was transferred to my cell. Before we were arrested, we lived in the same house and our children played together, so we had a lot to talk about. Meanwhile, Eitingon again became an unwanted witness - this time for Brezhnev, who did not want to be reminded of old cases. He obviously did not like it when, during the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the Victory over Germany, he received a petition signed by twenty-four NKVD-KGB veterans, including Rudolf Abel (five of them were Heroes of the Soviet Union) with a request to reconsider my case and the case of Eitingon. The new people who surrounded Brezhnev relied on a certificate from Prosecutor General Rudenko on my case. It stated that, being the head of the Special Group of the NKVD, established by Beria and consisting of the most loyal people to him, I organized terrorist actions against his personal enemies. All the signatories of the petition protested, stated that they were employees of the Special Group, but in no way belonged to the number of Beria's confidants. They demanded that specific examples of crimes and acts of terrorism be given to support the indictment and sentence. The conversation of the veterans in the Central Committee ended without results, but on the eve of the 23rd Party Congress they filed a new application and directly accused Prosecutor Rudenko of falsifying the court case, mine and Eitingon's. They were joined by former Comintern members and foreign communists who were in partisan detachments during the Great Patriotic War.

The pressure on the "instances" was growing. The former Minister of Defense of Bulgaria, who served under Eitingon in China in the 1920s, approached Suslov on our behalf, but he flew into an indescribable rage.

These matters are settled by the Central Committee once and for all. This is entirely our internal affair, - Suslov, who was in charge of foreign policy in the Politburo, as well as for state security and intelligence personnel, told him.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR prepared a draft Decree on my early release after I had already suffered a second heart attack and became blind in my left eye, but on December 19, 1966, Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, rejected this submission. I remained in prison for another year and a half.

My youngest son Anatoly, a graduate student of the Department of Political Economy, as a member of the party, went to the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Supreme Soviet to work on my case. At first, petty officials refused to take him seriously, but he showed them a notice from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, signed by the head of the secretariat of Podgorny, and demanded that one of the responsible employees take it.

Anatoly was firm but reasonable in his demands. He referred to my case in the Party Control Committee and the opinion of the now head of the secretariat of this committee, Klimov, who confirmed my innocence to him and allowed him to refer to it. The workers of the Central Committee of the party sent their son to the Presidium of the Supreme Council, where he was received by the head of the reception, Sklyarov. Anatoly explained to this gray-haired, calm man, who had extensive experience in party work, the essence of my case. Anatoly was only twenty-three years old, and he had just received a party card.

"As a member of the party," he turned to Sklyarov, "I ask you to answer clearly and sincerely: how can the top leadership ignore evidence of the innocence of a person who has devoted his whole life to the party and the state. How can the Presidium ignore the request of the Heroes of the Soviet Union for the rehabilitation of my father?"

Sklyarov was most embarrassed by Anatoly's question why the Supreme Council, in its refusal, referred to the petition of his mother, who did not submit it, instead of correctly indicating that it was a petition from the prosecutor's office, the KGB and the Supreme Court.

Sklyarov carefully looked at Anatoly and said:

"I know your father is an honest man. I remember him from his Komsomol work in Kharkov. But the decision on his case was taken "at the top". It is final. Nobody will review it. As for you, you know too much about matters about which it would be better for you to know nothing at all. I assure you, no one will interfere with your scientific career if you behave sensibly. Your father will be out of prison in a year and a half, at the end of his term. Think about how you can help your family. I wish you success in this.

Anatoly suppressed the lump that rose in his throat and took a deep breath. He realized that he would need to hide his feelings, like his entire family, towards Brezhnev and his entourage. The wife, leaving the hospital, was very concerned that Anatoly's campaign through the "instances" would not cause serious trouble. Therefore, she began to teach her son elementary methods of conspiracy. He learned how to determine if he was being followed, whether his phone was tapped, how to identify informants in his environment, what possible approaches could be used to develop him undercover. This proved to be very useful for him in order not to enter into dangerous political discussions and to stay away from circles critical of the regime. Anatoly's wife warned him never to meet with foreigners without witnesses, and only as an official.

On August 21, 1968, the day the Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia, I was released. My brother-in-law brought me to Moscow. I was given my Swiss chronometer watch (they were still running) and 80,000 rubles worth of government bonds. In 1975, I received money from them, the amount was solid - 8 thousand rubles.

When I returned from prison, our apartment was filled with relatives. Everything seemed like a dream to me. Freedom is such a joy, but I could hardly sleep - I was used to having the lights on all night. Walked around the apartment and kept their hands behind their backs, as required during

walks in the prison yard. Crossing the street... This was already a whole problem, because after fifteen years of being in a cramped cell, the space that opened up seemed huge and dangerous.

Soon old friends came to visit me - Zoya Rybkina, Raisa Sobol, who became a famous writer Irina Guro, Eitingon. Even people with whom I was not particularly close came to pay their respects: Ilyin, Vasilevsky, Semyonov and Fitin. They immediately offered me a job as a translator from German, Polish and Ukrainian. I signed two contracts with the publishing house "Children's Literature" for the translation of stories from German and Ukrainian. Ilyin, as the organizing secretary of the Moscow branch of the Writers' Union, and Irina Guro helped me join the section of translators at the Literary Fund. After the publication of my translations and three books, I received the right to a pension as a writer - 130 rubles a month. It was the highest civilian pension, but still less than 200 rubles a month, which the wife received as a retired lieutenant colonel of state security.

After a month of freedom, I suffered another heart attack, but recovered after spending two months at the Institute of Cardiology. The wife objected to new appeals for rehabilitation, believing that it was not worth drawing attention to herself. She was afraid that conversations with prosecutors and party officials could lead to a new, fatal heart attack. I typed my petitions secretly when she went shopping and sent them to Andropov, the head of the KGB, and to the Party Control Committee. I got a call from the KGB and very kindly advised me where to find documents in order to expedite the consideration of my case, but this case itself was not in their competence. The KGB, for its part, guaranteed that the Maya would not be evicted from Moscow, despite the fact that formally I remained a dangerous criminal and had a restriction on registration. If not for his help, I would automatically be under police surveillance, I could have been evicted from Moscow. The policeman who came with the check widened his eyes when I presented a new passport issued by the Main Police Department of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs.

After that, I was no longer worried.

In the 70s I did a lot of literary work. The fees for translations and books (I wrote under the pseudonym Anatoly Andreev in collaboration with Irina Guro) served as an aid to retirement and made it possible to live quite tolerably. I have translated, written and edited fourteen books in total. Among them were four collections of memoirs of partisans who fought during the war years under my command. From time to time I met my friends in Gesselberg's photo studio on Kuznetsky Most, not far from the central building of the Lubyanka. His studio was well known for their wonderful work. Gesselberg was a hospitable host: in the back room of his atelier, Eitingon, Reichman, Fitin, Abel, Molody and other employees who were still serving often gathered to talk and drink a glass. My wife sharply objected to my trips to Gesselberg's studio.

Abel, who supported me, complained that he was being used as a museum piece and not being given a real job. The same was said by Conon the Young, known as Gordon Lonsdale, whom I had never met before. Eitingon and Reichman looked at me with disapproval when I remained silent, listening to their critical attacks on Brezhnev and the KGB leadership, or quietly slipped out of the room.

Of course, those times were very different from Stalin's, but it was hard for me to believe that the KGB colonels, who were still in the service, could easily meet for a friendly feast and openly vilify the Brezhnev leadership, morals in the KGB.

Abel told me the story of his arrest when he tried to take thirty thousand dollars hidden in a safe house in Brooklyn, as he had to report for them to the Center. We both decided that it was unwise to go back for the money: after he was arrested by the FBI, the lawyers' fees during the process cost much more. But he was afraid that if he did not return the money, he would be suspected of embezzling it.

Lonsdale (codename "Ben") was as outraged as Abel that the Center had tied

him with an agent who worked in the countries of the Eastern bloc under diplomatic cover. This was a violation of the elementary rules of secrecy, which forbade an illegal resident to enter into direct contact with persons who, due to their long stay in the Warsaw Pact countries, were automatically in the sphere of constant surveillance of their country's counterintelligence. However, our meetings and complaints about the injustice of fate ended in 1980, when Geselberg's studio was demolished and a new KGB building appeared on this site.

Literary work became more and more important for me, it allowed me to adapt in society. The novel about Kosior "Horizons", written together with Irina Guro and edited by his wife, received a good review in Pravda. The book went through several editions and brought us a decent income. I considered my publications about the years of the war to be more important. In "Pravda" and other central newspapers, they also received a good assessment. One review emphasized that the NKVD Special Group played a huge role in organizing the partisan movement during the war. In 1976, I renewed my petitions for rehabilitation. I wrote that if Pravda, as an organ of the Central Committee, recognized the heroic actions of the Special Group, then it cannot be a Beria terrorist organization, as it is presented in my criminal case.

Friends and acquaintances Geselberg, Fitin, Studnikov, Zarubin and Vasilevsky passed away. In 1976, Eitingon and I turned to Mercader and Dolores Ibarruri with a request to support our petition for rehabilitation before Andropov and the Party Control Committee, pointing out the party's moral responsibility for the injustice committed against us. Andropov and Pelshe, who then headed the Party Control Committee, gave an opinion on our cases in 1977, where they noted that there was no evidence of our involvement in Beria's crimes. By this time, fifteen years after his death in prison during interrogation, Serebryansky had been rehabilitated. For this, the decision of the military prosecutor was enough. Our cases with the conclusion of Pelshe and Andropov and the certificate of Klimov, the deputy chief military prosecutor Baturin and the head of the KGB investigative department Volkov were to be reported to the Politburo. However, Suslov resolutely opposed this, and no one in the Party Control Committee and the KGB wanted to conflict with him and Rudenko because of us.

By order of Pelshe, for the sake of consolation, or something, Eitingon and I received the right to use the Kremlin polyclinic and hospital, as well as the KGB hospital.

In August 1977, on behalf of Pelshe, we were received by his first deputy, Gustov. He said that he was glad to welcome the heroic intelligence officers, but, unfortunately, at the present time our affairs could not be resolved positively. We will have to wait, the time will come for their revision.

In 1978, Ramon Mercader died in Cuba, who worked there at the invitation of Fidel Castro as an adviser in the Ministry of the Interior. His body was secretly transported to Moscow. At that moment, my wife and I were in a sanatorium. Eitingon was also not informed about the funeral, which the KGB cowardly tried to carry out without our participation and extra publicity. However, Mercader's widow, Roquelia Mendoza, raised a fuss, called Eitingon, and he saw off Mercader on his last journey.

In 1981, just after the next party congress, to which we also addressed with a letter, but did not receive an answer, Eitingon died in the Kremlin clinic from a stomach ulcer. Throughout the 1980s, especially before Brezhnev's death, I continued to bombard the Central Committee with my statements. The last witnesses, who were still alive at that time, supported my efforts to achieve rehabilitation in 1984, 1985 and 1988, turning to Chernenko, and then to Gorbachev and Alexander Yakovlev, referring to the conclusion of Andropov and Pelshe about my innocence. These petitions were edited by Sklyarov, who was still the head of the reception of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: an experienced functionary, he knew how to submit material in order to get approval from above. General secretaries of the party came and went, but Sklyarov still remained in his place.

In 1984, as Klimov told me, a positive decision was ready, but Chernenko died, and there was still no answer from Gorbachev or Solomentsev, the chairman of the Party Control Committee, who then became chairman of the Special Commission for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repressions. My daughter-in-law's father, Deputy Minister of the Coal Industry, was on friendly terms with Solomentsev, and I asked him to secure a favorable decision. Solomentsev reported my case to Gorbachev, but he refused.

Johann Steiner, deputy general secretary of the Austrian Communist Party and a former illegal immigrant of the NKVD Special Group, demanded in 1988 that his name, like the names of other prominent communists, be cleared of the slanderous accusations contained in the Sudoplatov case. He was politely listened to, but did nothing. In 1988, I was invited to the prosecutor's office, where they said that my case would not be reviewed, and handed me an official response signed by the Prosecutor General Rekunkov. There was a serious mistake in this document; it said that I was convicted as an accomplice of both Beria and Abakumov, although there was no mention of Abakumov at all in my indictment.

In 1986, my wife turned eighty-one years old, and her health deteriorated sharply. At first it seemed that she was simply weakened compared to what she always was, but we soon learned that she had Parkinson's disease. As a veteran, she was eligible for treatment at a KGB hospital. First Deputy Chairman of the KGB Bobkov helped me get permission to be in the hospital room with my wife. For the last two months I have stayed by her side, noticing with pain how life is slowly leaving her. She died in September 1988, and her ashes rest in the cemetery wall of the Donskoy Monastery. The ashes of Grigulevich, Eitingon and Abel lie nearby. Irina Guro - Raisa Sobol also died. Zoya Rybkina lived for three years after the death of my wife.

From a narrow circle of friends, only three of us survived the glorious, but tragic times that went down in the history of our country - Zoya Zarubina, Anna Tsukanova and me. As intelligence veterans, Zoya and I receive invitations on May 9 to the celebrations on the occasion of Victory Day with our children and grandchildren at the KGB club and at the Dynamo stadium. Anna and I are getting older and it's getting harder and harder to date, and we communicate mostly by phone. Zoya is still busy with social activities and gives lectures. She traveled to Australia and was recently invited to Potsdam and Yalta in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the conferences of the leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition there.

After the death of my wife, my health deteriorated, and then my son Anatoly turned to Kryuchkov, then the first deputy chairman of the KGB, with a request for my hospitalization. Such permission was granted. After the hospital for two months, I underwent a course of treatment in the sanatorium of the Central Committee of the party. Top management in the mid-80s took an ambivalent position towards me. On the one hand, believing that my case was apparently fabricated, I was invited to the Y. Andropov Institute to give lectures on the history of intelligence. I told how we used the pacifist views of Oppenheimer, Fermi, and the sympathies for the Soviet Union of Szilard and Bohr to obtain information on the atomic bomb. Incidentally, Yatskov, who was present at the time, did not dispute my words. I took part in a KGB conference on the study of the history of intelligence operations in Germany, held in Yasenevo, the headquarters of foreign intelligence. In 1986, on the eve of Gorbachev's meeting with President Reagan in Reykjavik, I sent a memorandum to the KGB outlining our experience in servicing the Yalta Conference.

All this is so. But on the other hand, I still haven't been rehabilitated.

Publicity was gaining strength, and the son decided to hire a lawyer who would take care of my case. This shocked the Party Control Committee and the prosecutor's office. The lawyer drafted a letter accusing the prosecutor's office of deceit and referred to a factual error in the prosecutor's response. He demanded permission to get acquainted with all the materials of the case, but he was refused.

For the new secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Falin, who was in charge of foreign policy, I

prepared a reference on the history of German-Soviet relations in the prewar period. My other note concerned the conduct of national politics, including the Ukrainian and Jewish problems. He thanked for these materials, but did not provide any significant support to me in rehabilitation matters.

Gorbachev, meanwhile, was interested in how orders for the destruction of people and how they were liquidated were prepared and transmitted. I was visited in connection with this by Major General Shadrin, who was in charge of special assignments in the KGB, but I declined his request to describe how such assignments were carried out. I explained that the full records of this were kept in the archives of the Central Committee of the Party, and pointed out that I personally prepared two handwritten reports on the operations in Mexico City and Rotterdam, for which I was responsible. Other reports were written by hand by the top officials directly involved in these operations - Ogoltsov, Savchenko, Tsanova and Abakumov, or Molotov and Vyshinsky, when they headed the Information Committee. For Shadrin, it was news that military intelligence in the 1930-1950s also eliminated double agents and defectors, this was done by a special group. I advised him to consult the CCP on these matters. I believe he informed his leadership about our meeting.

Ironically, while I was applying for rehabilitation, Gorbachev received a peculiar message signed by the three generals who had taken part in Beria's arrest. In April 1985, they demanded that Gorbachev be awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, which they had been promised at one time for conducting a secret and risky operation. On April 19, 1985, Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Kapitonov sent this letter to Gorbachev. Thus, when the chairman of the Party Control Committee, Solomentsev, was preparing a case for my rehabilitation, the generals demanded awards for themselves. Gorbachev turned down both petitions - both mine and the general's. The generals were reminded that on January 28, 1954, they had already received the Order of the Red Banner for this operation, and the Central Committee did not consider it expedient to return to this issue again.

In 1990, I learned from a high-ranking KGB officer: Gorbachev was unhappy that the process of democratization was getting out of control. This autumn, the KGB and the armed forces were ordered to prepare a plan for the introduction of martial law. At the same time, the salaries of all military personnel were doubled.

I received substantial moral support from Major Generals of the KGB Kevorkov and Gubernatorov. They took advantage of the appointment of the former head of the KGB ideological department, General Abramov, as Deputy Prosecutor General of the USSR to study my case in his office. According to them, the four volumes of the file contained rumors, and not concrete evidence against me. More importantly, they found a note from the Politburo with a draft decision: to accept the proposal of the Party Control Committee and the KGB to rehabilitate Sudoplatov and Eitingon due to newly discovered circumstances and in view of the lack of evidence of their involvement in the crimes of Beria and his group, and also taking into account the contribution to the victory over fascism and in solving the atomic problem.

This gave me confidence. My new application for rehabilitation was supported not only by the KGB, but also by high-ranking officials in the apparatus of the Central Committee. parties. Glasnost gave me the opportunity to use the press. I wrote a letter to Alexander Yakovlev's commission for the rehabilitation of victims of political repression, in which I stated that I would inform the press: the truth about the real mechanism of repression is still being hidden. In another letter - Kryuchkov - I asked to transfer copies of documents about my intelligence work to the prosecutor's office and gave the order numbers (they were suggested to me by my friends in the KGB) about the tasks of the units that I led. This could establish that my case was falsified.

The KGB reacted immediately. The deputy head of the personnel department informed me that all the documents listed in my letter were certified by the KGB and sent to the prosecutor's office with a recommendation to analyze and consider them as new materials in my case. I was invited to the Military Prosecutor's Office, where they told me that my

the case will be reviewed. They also rechecked the case of Abakumov and his group. The new investigation took a year. I got the impression that it was carried out on someone's tacit instructions.

And then strange things began to happen. Beria's case was withdrawn from the prosecutor's office and transferred to Gorbachev's secretariat. Then some documents disappeared. Soon after that, an article attacking me appeared in the Moskovskiy Novosti newspaper, in which quotations were made from the indictment in the Beria case and it was alleged that, on my instructions, secret murders of people were organized in safe houses in Moscow and other cities with the help of poisons. I was accused as an accomplice of Beria, without mentioning my work in intelligence. The newspaper asked readers to send any information related to Sudoplatov, since there are no facts and specific names of his victims in the Beria case. There was no response from readers. In an editorial note to the article, Yegor Yakovlev, the editor of Moskovskiy Novosti, wrote that a law was needed to control the operational work of the intelligence services and, in particular, the toxicological laboratories dealing with poisons, both in the CIA and the KGB.

These remarks were made in response to General Kalugin's claim that a similar lab still exists within the KGB and that the CIA is testing toxic drugs on American citizens.

In October 1990, Moskovskiy Novosti published an article stating that Mairanovsky was a victim of Stalinist repressions and most likely slandered himself during interrogations. According to the author of the article, he had a high reputation among Moscow scientists. The article also contained harsh criticism of the way Beria's case was conducted - "in the best Stalinist tradition", without concrete evidence. Thus, although indirectly, the accusations made in connection with the Beria case against me and Eitingon were also called into question.

I realized that the question of my rehabilitation would drag on indefinitely, since no one in power wanted the truth to be made public, which would compromise Khrushchev's liberal policies. And the reformers tried to use Khrushchev's "thaw" as a model for perestroika. The destruction of such political opponents as Trotsky and the Ukrainian nationalists, by decision of the country's top leaders, was no longer discussed in the press. Gorbachev remained silent, he could not afford to expose Khrushchev as an accomplice of Stalin and the organizer of secret political assassinations. After all, then the historical memory of the 20th Party Congress, at which Khrushchev spoke with the exposure of Stalin's crimes, would have been tarnished. Members of the Central Committee of the party and many delegates to the congress knew about his and their own participation in Stalin's crimes. Therefore, if my case had surfaced, the entire party leadership under Khrushchev would have been exposed, using Beria and the people who worked under him as scapegoats. Gorbachev's leadership would then bear the responsibility for concealing the guilt of their mentors who brought them to power.

Beria and his enemies in the leadership of the country professed one morality. I fully agree with the writer-publicist Kirill Stolyarov, who wrote that the only difference between Beria and his rivals is only in the amount of blood shed by them. However, despite their crimes, Beria, Stalin, Molotov managed to transform a backward agrarian country into a powerful superpower with nuclear missile weapons. By committing the same monstrous crimes, Khrushchev, Bulganin and Malenkov, however, to a much lesser extent contributed to the creation of the powerful potential of the USSR as a great power. Unlike Stalin, they significantly weakened the state as a result of their struggle for power. Gorbachev and his assistants, no less guided by their own ambitions, led the great power to complete collapse. Gorbachev and Alexander Yakovlev behaved like typical party leaders, hiding behind democratic slogans to strengthen their power. As statesmen, they proved to be bankrupt and harbored the illusion that they could outwit their rivals.

(Yeltsin, Ligachev, Ryzhkov, Podozkov and others) and thereby maintain undivided power in their hands. Their achievements in the field of domestic and foreign policy are equal to zero. In 1989, out of personal animosity, Gorbachev removed Erich Honecker from power in East Germany in order to "strengthen socialism", but just like in 1953, this led to upheavals, only this time the GDR ceased to exist. He and Shevardnadze proved unable to negotiate economic compensation from the West in exchange for the withdrawal of our troops from Eastern Europe and the reduction of strategic weapons.

In June 1989, at Zoya Rybkina's dacha in Peredelkino, where I was then, I got a call from Colonel General Dmitry Vatkunov, who was writing biographies of Stalin and Trotsky. General Kevorkov warned me that I should be careful with this man in my revelations, but I still decided to go to this meeting, since Volkogonov had access to the archives and could present the past with its cruelties and triumphs in its true light. Cautiously (after all, he held an official position and was subordinate to the Central Committee and the military authorities), while naturally making mistakes, Volkogonov, however, opened a new chapter in the study of our history. He promised to support my request for rehabilitation. During our meeting on November 4, 1989, I suggested that he correct the story with Stamenov, which had just been published in the *Oktyabr* magazine. Volkogonov claimed that Stalin personally met with Stamenov, and I knew that this was not true. I myself was engaged in probing and spreading disinformation rumors among diplomats in order to find out the degree of readiness of the Germans to agree to a peaceful settlement of relations with us in 1941. But Volkogonov's book "Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy" was published, and this episode remained unchanged. Volkogonov adheres to the version that Stalin and Molotov were planning a separate peace treaty with the Germans, similar to Brest Lithuanian, and cites discussions in the Politburo as a source of information.

The Politburo could, of course, discuss this intelligence operation. As I already wrote, my task was to launch disinformation about a possible peace with Hitler, using Stamenov as a source.

I pointed Volkogonov to the materials on the Trotsky case, kept in the archives of the KGB and the Central Committee of the party - without me he would never have been able to find them. Even with access to top-secret archive folders, finding a particular document is as difficult as a needle in a haystack. For example, he could not know that Trotsky's personal archive, stolen in Paris in 1937, was not where it should be, but in the International Department of the Central Committee of the party and very actively used.

Since the failed coup attempt in August 1991, secret Communist Party archives have been plundered almost uncontrollably to be used and sold for films, research and non-fiction. Although Volkogonov notes in the preface to his book on Trotsky the assistance I rendered, mentioning my name and quoting excerpts from my and Eitingon's appeals to the Central Committee of the CPSU for rehabilitation did not agree with me. That is why my real and code name were revealed there for the first time in connection with the operation against the fascist OUN. By the way, on the basis of this and other publications of the same kind, in 1992 the Ukrainian prosecutor's office opened a criminal case against me. Only in 1994 was I left alone after it was established that the fascist terrorist OUN of Konovalets—

Bandera officially proclaimed a state of war with Soviet Russia and the USSR, which lasted from 1919 to 1991.

Mentioning me and Eitingon in a book about Trotsky and reporting on our role in the partisan war against Nazi Germany and in solving the atomic problem, Volkogonov, with all his minuses and mistakes, tries to objectively evaluate our work. For many years my name was unknown - it cannot be found either in the descriptions of the heroic deeds in the war with Hitler, or in the history of our intelligence. It was Volkogonov who conceived the idea of telling the story of my life and my generation. A story that gives me the opportunity

now try to put everything in its place.

In 1991, the military justice authorities concluded that Abakumov's case was fabricated and, although he was responsible for the illegal repression, he was not guilty of treason or crimes against the party. The military prosecutor's office recommended changing the article of the guilty verdict, on the basis of which he was sentenced to death. The true crime of Abakumov was abuse of power and falsification of criminal cases, and in accordance with the law of that time, the punishment was - execution - the same was supposed. This conclusion meant that those who stood at the top rung of power, over Abakumov, were guilty of these crimes in no less degree than he.

The military prosecutor's office took a new approach to my case and Eitingon's. The materials proved that we did not fabricate false cases against "enemies of the people". Official accusations that we were Beria's accomplices in committing high treason, planning and carrying out terrorist acts against the government and Beria's personal enemies were refuted by documents.

After the events of August 1991 and the collapse of the USSR, shortly before retiring, the chief military prosecutor stopped our cases and said: if I had not rehabilitated you, archival materials would have shown that I was another accomplice in hiding the truth about the secret springs of the struggle for power in Kremlin in the 1930s and 1950s. He drew a line in our case and signed an order for the rehabilitation of Eitingon and me.

After the collapse of the CPSU, my rehabilitation was no longer a matter of political conjuncture, but became just an ordinary episode during the collapse of the Soviet Union. Military justice should no longer ask for instructions from the country's top leaders on how to handle my case. A new generation has come to power. And although it grew under the former regime, the current leaders were not complicit in the atrocities of Stalin and Khrushchev, the country's former authoritarian rulers. Khrushchev's name, actively used at the beginning of perestroika, lost its appeal. In the difficult situation after the collapse of the USSR, generated by the lack of political culture, hatred towards me is retained only by those who would prefer that people who know the real circumstances of the tragedy and heroism of the past silently die. They openly seek to appropriate to themselves a monopoly on the interpretation of the events of our past. Although most of them compromised themselves by deliberately presenting the public with grossly falsified explanations of the motives and mechanism of Stalin's repressions and major events in our domestic and foreign policy in the 1960-1990s.

The Soviet Union, to which I was devoted with all my heart and for which I was ready to give my life, for the sake of which I tried not to notice the cruelties that were happening, justifying them by the desire to turn the country from backward to advanced, for the benefit of which I spent long months away from my homeland, home, wife and children - even fifteen years of imprisonment did not kill my devotion - this Soviet Union ceased to exist. And only when the USSR, once a proud superpower, collapsed, I was finally restored to my civil rights and my name returned to its rightful place in history.

I hope that my story will help the current generation to take a balanced, free from conjuncture. And extremism's position in assessing our heroic and tragic past.